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WILLIAM TYSON. F.S.A.
BRISTOL.

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An extract from KEW GARDENS, *an unpublished M.S of* CHATTERTON *being a fac simile of his hand writing.*

What are the Wages of the tuneful Nine,
What are their pleasures when compar'd to mine.
Happy I eat and toll my num'rous Pence,
Free from the Servitude of Rhime & Sense;
Tho' singsong Whitehead ushers in the year,
With Joy to Britain's King and Sovereign dear:
And in compliance to an ancient Mode,
Measures his Syllables into an Ode;
Yet such the scurvy Merit of his Muse,
He bows to Deans and licks his Lordship's Shoes
Then leave the wicked barren way of rhime,
Fly far from Poverty, be wise in time:
Regard the Office more, Parnassus less,
Put your religion in a decent dress:
Then may your Interest in the Town advance,
Above the reach of Muses or Romance.

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THE LIFE OF THOMAS CHATTERTON, WITH CRITICISMS ON HIS *GENIUS AND WRITINGS*, AND A CONCISE VIEW OF THE CONTROVERSY CONCERNING *ROWLEY's POEMS.*

By G. GREGORY, D.D. F.A.S.
AUTHOR OF ESSAYS HISTORICAL AND MORAL, &c.

Agora com pobreza aborrecida,
Por hoſpicios alheos degradado;
Agora da eſperança ja adquirida,
De novo mais que nunca derribado.

CAMOENS.

LONDON.
PRINTED FOR G. KEARSLEY, No. 46, FLEET STREET.
1789.
[Price Five Shillings ſewed.]

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TO THE RIGHT HON. THE

MARQUIS of LANSDOWN.

MY LORD,

PERMIT me to introduce the unpatroniſed CHATTERTON to the only ſtateſman of our time who has manifeſted a genuine zeal for the promotion of literature and ſcience. Had the unfortunate ſubject of theſe pages but known, or had he made himſelf known to your Lordſhip, there is much probability that the world would at this day have continued to enjoy the increaſing fruits of his uncommon talents.

It would, however, be the extreme of injuſtice to confine your Lordſhip's commendation to the exerciſe of private munificence, or the admiration of learning. As one of that public, therefore, who are probably indebted for every thing which they poſſeſs or enjoy, to the wiſdom

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wiſdom and virtue of your Lordſhip's adminiſtration, allow me to unite with all the honeſt and diſcerning part of the community, in expreſſing my gratitude for the moſt honourable and advantageous Peace which was ever atchieved by this nation. When the little contentions of Party are no more, and the clouds of Faction are diſſipated, the Friend of Mankind and his Country will ſtand conſecrated to the veneration of poſterity; and it will appear greater to have performed much within a ſhort period, than to have enjoyed the emoluments of office for an age of inactivity.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

With great reſpect,

Your Lordſhip's obliged

And faithful Servant,

Winkworth Buildings,
May 20, 1789.

The Author.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following pages were compoſed at the requeſt of the reſpectable Editor of the Biographia Britannica, in order to be inſerted in that valuable work. The author, however, requeſted leave to print off a ſmall edition, in a ſeparate ſtate, for the accommodation and ſatisfaction of a few friends, to whom he was indebted on the occaſion for ſome valuable communications.

Perhaps the admirers of CHATTERTON, and thoſe in particular who have interested themselves in the controverſy relating to Rowley's Poems, will not be diſpleaſed at ſeeing collected in one view all the particulars which are known concerning that extraordinary character.

The only claim to the public approbation, which the author preſumes to aſſert in favour of this little volume, is that of authenticity, as the public may reſt aſſured that no fact has been admitted but upon the moſt unexceptionable teſtimony. He is not at liberty to publiſh all his authorities, but whenever they are known he is confident in the aſſertion, that they will be found highly reſpectable. The notes marked O. were added by a moſt learned and intelligent friend, who honoured the manuſcript with his peruſal.

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THE LIFE OF THOMAS CHATTERTON.

THE anceſtry of men of genius is ſeldom of much importance to the public or their biographers; the commonwealth of literature is almoſt a perfect democracy, in which the riſe or promotion of individuals is generally the conſequence of their reſpective merits. The family of Chatterton, however, though in no reſpect illuſtrious, is more nearly connected with ſome of the circumſtances of his literary hiſtory than that of moſt other votaries of the Muſes.—It appears that the office of ſexton of St. Mary

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Redcliffe, in Briſtol, had continued in different branches of this family for more than one hundred and fifty years; and that John Chatterton, the laſt of the name who enjoyed that office, was elected in March 1725, and continued ſexton till his death, which happened in the year 1748 *. Thomas Chatterton, the nephew of the preceding, and father to the extraordinary perſon who is the ſubject of theſe memoirs, had, we are informed, been in the early part of life in the ſtation of a writing uſher to a claſſical ſchool †, was afterwards engaged as a ſinging man of the Cathedral of Briſtol, and latterly was maſter of the free ſchool in Pyle-ſtreet in the ſame city ‡. He died in Auguſt 1752 ||, leaving

* Dr. Milles's Preliminary Diſſertation to Rowley's Poems, page 6.

† Ibid.

‡ Ib. Mr. Bryant's Obſ. p. 514.

|| Ibid.

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leaving his wife then pregnant of a ſon, who was born on the 20th of November, and baptized the 1ſt of January following, by the name of THOMAS, at St. Mary Redcliffe, by the Rev. Mr. Gibbs, vicar of that church.

The life of Chatterton, though ſhort, was eventful; it commenced as it ended, in indigence and misfortune. By the premature loſs of his father he was deprived of that careful attention which would probably have conducted his early years through all the difficulties that circumſtances or diſpoſition might oppoſe to the attainment of knowledge; and by the unpromiſing aſpect of his infant faculties he was excluded a ſeminary, which might have afforded advantages ſuperior to thoſe he afterwards enjoyed. His father had been ſucceeded in the ſchool at Pyle-ſtreet by a Mr. Love, and to his care Chatterton was committed at the age

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of five years; but either his faculties were not yet opened, or the waywardneſs of genius, which will purſue only ſuch objects as are ſelf-approved, incapacitated him from receiving inſtruction in the ordinary methods; and he was remanded to his mother as a dull boy, and incapable of improvement *. Nothing is more fallacious than the judgments which are formed during infancy of the future abilities of youth. Mrs. Chatterton was rendered extremely unhappy by the apparently tardy underſtanding of her ſon, till *he fell in love*, as ſhe expreſſed herſelf, with the illuminated capitals of an old muſical manuſcript, in French, which enabled her, by taking advantage of the momentary paſſion, to initiate him in the alphabet †. She taught him afterwards to read from an old black-lettered Teſtament, or Bible ‡.

Perhaps

* Bryant's Obſervations, p. 519.
† Ib. Milles's Prelim. Diſſ. p. 5.
‡ Milles's Prelim. Diſſ. p. 5.

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Perhaps the bent of moſt men's ſtudies may, in ſome meaſure, be determined by accident, and frequently in very early life; nor is it unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that his peculiar attachment to antiquities may, in a conſiderable degree, have reſulted from this little circumſtance.

We are not informed by what means or by what recommendation he gained admiſſion into Colſton's charity-ſchool; but doubtleſs, in the ſituation of his mother at the time, it muſt have been a moſt deſirable event; however unſuitable ſuch a courſe of diſcipline might be to the improvement of Chatterton's peculiar talents. Moſt of thoſe prodigies of genius, who had hitherto aſtoniſhed mankind, by the early diſplay of abilities and learning, had been aided by the advantage of able inſtructors, or had at leaſt been left at liberty to purſue the impulſe of their ſuperior underſtandings; it was the lot of Chatter-

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ton to be confined to the mechanical drudgery of a charity-ſchool; and the little ordinary portions of leiſure, with which boys in his ſituation are indulged, was the only time allowed him to lay the foundation of that extenſive and abſtruſe erudition which decorated even his early years. This ſeminary, founded by Edward Colſton, Eſq. is ſituate at St. Auguſtine's Back in Briſtol, and is much upon the ſame plan with Chriſt's Hoſpital in London, (the only plan perhaps on which a charity-ſchool can be generally uſeful,) the boys being *boarded* in the houſe, clothed, and taught reading, writing, and arithmetic. Chatterton, at this period, wanted a few months of eight years of age, being admitted on the 3d of Auguſt 1760*.

The

* On the authority of a letter ſigned G. B. dated Briſtol, Auguſt 30, 1778, printed in the St. James's Chronicle. In Dr. Milles's Prelim. Diſſ. it is 1761; but this muſt be a miſprint, as all agree that he was between ſeven and eight years old when admitted.

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The rules of this inſtitution are ſtrict. The ſchool hours in ſummer are from ſeven o'clock till twelve in the morning, and from one till five in the afternoon; and in winter, from eight to twelve, and from one to four. The boys are obliged to be in bed every night in the year at eight o'clock, and are never permitted to be abſent from ſchool, except on Saturdays and Saints days, and then only from between one and two in the afternoon till between ſeven and eight in the evening. The detail of theſe apparently trivial particulars may at preſent ſavour of a culpable minuteneſs; but their importance will be experienced before I have concluded.

The firſt years of his reſidence at this ſeminary paſſed without notice, and perhaps without effort. His ſiſter, indeed, in her letter to Mr. Croft, remarks, that he very early diſcovered a thirſt for preeminence, and that even before he was

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five years old he was accuſtomed to preſide over his play-mates *. There is a curious letter from Mr. Thiſtlethwaite of Briſtol, publiſhed by Dr. Milles in his edition of Rowley's Poems, which contains many intereſting particulars concerning Chatterton. In the ſummer of 1763, Mr. Thiſtlethwaite, who was then very young, contracted an intimacy with one Thomas Philips †, an uſher or aſſiſtant-maſter at Colſton's ſchool. Though the education of Philips had not been the moſt liberal, he

* Love and Madneſs, p. 161. There is an anecdote of Chatterton (it is given, however, only on a vague and indiſtinct report) partly to the ſame purpoſe. When very young, a manufacturer promiſed to make Mrs. Chatterton's children a preſent of ſome earthen-ware; on aſking the boy what device he would have painted on his—"Paint me (ſaid he) an angel, with wings, and a trumpet, to trumpet my name over the world."

† In all probability the perſon on whoſe death Chatterton compoſed an Elegy. I wiſh we were poſſeſſed of more perfect memoirs of Philips. His taſte for poetry excited a ſimilar flame in ſeveral young men, who made no mean figure in the periodical publications of that day, in Chatterton, Thiſtlethwaite, Cary, Fowler, and others.

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he yet poſſeſſed a taſte for hiſtory and poetry; and by his attempts in verſe, excited a degree of literary emulation among the elder boys. It is very remarkable, that Chatterton is ſaid to have appeared altogether as an idle ſpectator of theſe poetical conteſts; he ſimply contented himſelf with the ſports and paſtimes which appeared more immediately adapted to his age; he apparently poſſeſſed neither inclination nor ability for literary purſuits, nor does Mr. Thiſtlethwaite believe that he attempted a ſingle couplet during the firſt three years of his acquaintance with him *. Whatever grounds Mr. Thiſtlethwaite might have for this opinion, it, however, only ſerves to furniſh an additional proof of the deceitfulneſs of thoſe conjectures which are formed concerning the abilities of youth. The pert and forward boy, of active, but ſuperficial

* Milles's Rowley, p. 454.

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ſuperficial talents, generally bears away the palm from the modeſty and penſiveneſs of genius. Such a diſpoſition, which is in reality the reſult of inſenſibility, too frequently meets with encouragement, which produces indolence, impudence, and diſſipation; while the leſs ſhewy, but more excellent underſtandings, are depreſſed by neglect, or diſheartened by diſcouragement. Chatterton, doubtleſs, at that very period, was poſſeſſed of a vigour of underſtanding, of a quickneſs of penetration, a boldneſs of imagination, far ſuperior to the talents of his companions. But that penetration itſelf led him, perhaps, to feel more ſtrongly his own deficiences; thoſe delicate, yet vivid feelings which uſually accompany real abilities, induced him to decline a conteſt, in which there was a danger of experiencing the mortification of being inferior. If he produced any compoſitions, his exquiſite taſte

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taſte led him to ſuppreſs them. In the mean time he was laying in ſtores of information, and improving both his imagination and his judgment. About his tenth year he acquired a taſte for reading; and out of the trifle, which was allowed him by his mother for pocket-money, he began to hire books from a circulating library. As his taſte was different from children of his age, his diſpoſitions were alſo different. Inſtead of the thoughtleſs levity of childhood, he poſſeſſed the gravity, penſiveneſs, and melancholy of maturer life. His ſpirits were uneven; he was frequently ſo loſt in contemplation, that for many days together he would ſay very little, and apparently by conſtraint. His intimates in the ſchool were few, and thoſe of the moſt ſerious caſt. Between his eleventh and twelfth year, he wrote a Catalogue of the Books he had read, to the number of ſeventy. It is rather unfortunate

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fortunate that this Catalogue was not preſerved; his ſiſter only informs us that they principally conſiſted of hiſtory and divinity *. At the hours allotted him for play, he generally retired to read, and he was particularly ſolicitous to borrow books †. Though he does not appear to have manifeſted any violent inclination to diſplay his abilities, yet we have undoubted proofs that very early in life, he did not fail to exerciſe himſelf in compoſition. His ſiſter having made him a preſent of a pocket-book as a New-Year's gift, he returned it to her at the end of the year filled with writing, chiefly poetry ‡. It was probably from the remains of this pocket-book, that the author of Love and Madneſs tranſcribed a poem, which appears by the date (April 14th, 1764) to have

* Mrs. Newton's Letter in Love and Madneſs.

† Dr. Milles's Prelim. Diſſ. page 5.

‡ Mrs. Newton's Letter.

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have been written at the age of eleven years and a half*. This fact is certainly a ſtrong

* It may not be improper to produce this poem, not only as it is the earlieſt exiſting ſpecimen of Chatterton's compoſitions, but alſo for the ſake of ſome remarks, which will probably throw ſome light on the genius and character of its author.

APOSTATE WILL, by T. C.

In days of old, when Weſley's pow'r
Gather'd new ſtrength by every hour;
Apoſtate Will juſt ſunk in trade,
Reſolv'd his bargain ſhould be made;
Then ſtrait to Weſley he repairs,
And puts on grave and ſolemn airs,
Then thus the pious man addreſs'd,
Good Sir, I think your doctrine beſt,
Your ſervant will a Weſley be,
Therefore the principles teach me.
The preacher then inſtructions gave,
How he in this world ſhould behave,
He hears, aſſents, and gives a nod,
Says every word's the word of God.
Then lifting his diſſembling eyes,
How bleſſed is the ſect he cries,
Nor Bingham, Young, nor Stillingfleet
Shall make me from this ſect retreat.
He then his circumſtance declar'd,
How hardly with him matters far'd,
Begg'd him next meeting for to make
A ſmall collection for his ſake;

The

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a ſtrong contradiction to Mr. Thiſtlethwaite's aſſertion, yet perhaps it is not on

The preacher ſaid, do not repine,
The whole collection ſhall be thine.
With looks demure and cringing bows,
About his buſineſs ſtrait he goes;
His outward acts were grave and prim,
The Methodiſt appear'd in him;
But, be his outward what it will,
His heart was an Apoſtate's ſtill;
He'd oft profeſs an hallow'd flame,
And every where preach'd Weſley's name;
He was a preacher and what not,
As long as money could be got;
He'd oft profeſs with holy fire,
The labourer's worthy of his hire.

It happen'd once upon a time,
When all his works were in their prime,
A noble place appear'd in view,
Then—— to the Methodiſts, adieu;
A Methodiſt no more he'll be,
The Proteſtants ſerve beſt for *be*;
Then to the curâte ſtrait he ran,
And thus addreſs'd the rev'rend man;
I was a Methodiſt, 'tis true,
With penitence I turn to you;
O that it were your bounteous will
That I the vacant place might fill!
With juſtice I'd myſelf acquit,
Do every thing that's right and fit.

The

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on the whole ſo difficult to be reconciled as may at firſt be ſuſpected. In the regiſters of

> The curate ſtraitway gave conſent——
> To take the place he quickly went.
> Accordingly he took the place,
> And keeps it with diſſembled grace.

April 14, 1764.

In the firſt place, this poem ſhews the early turn and bent of his genius to ſatire, which predominated throughout his ſhort life, and with which he began and ended his literary career. Not only his ſchool-fellows and his inſtructors became the ſubjects of it at this early period, but his acquaintance and his friends felt its force.

In the next place, it appears that he was then no ſtranger to the works of Bingham, Young, and Stillingfleet, which were probably among the books of divinity that compoſed the liſt of thoſe he had read or conſulted, as mentioned in Mrs. Newton's Letter.

Laſtly, let it be obſerved, that the perſon he ſatirizes is ſuppoſed to have turned methodiſt for mercenary motives, and to have preached the goſpel merely to put money in his purſe.—Now Mr. Thiſtlethwaite, in his letter to Dean Milles, after mentioning Chatterton's intentions of leaving his maſter's ſervice and going to London, ſays—" I interrogated him as to the objects of his views and expectations, and what mode of life he intended to purſue on his arrival at London. The anſwer I received was a memorable one: My firſt attempt, ſaid he, ſhall be in the literary way; the promiſes I have received are ſufficient to diſpel doubt; but ſhould I, contrary to my expectations, find

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of the memory, a few months is but a trifling anachroniſm; beſides, tho' Chatterton might compoſe at that time, it does not follow that he was under any neceſſity of imparting his compoſitions to Mr. Thiſtlethwaite or Mr. Philips; indeed, he was the leſs likely to make them public, as they were of the ſatirical kind, and conſequently, if diſcovered, the boy might

find myſelf deceived, I will in that caſe turn Methodiſt preacher: Credulity is as potent a deity as ever, and a new ſect may eaſily be deviſed," &c.——*Milles's Rowley, page* 459.

Chatterton might in ſome meaſure have in view the character which he had before ſo ſucceſsfully depicted, when he thus expreſſed himſelf to Mr. Thiſtlethwaite. As his genius was verſatile, and his reading extenſive, it is poſſible this profeſſion might not be without ſome ſerious foundation; indeed, if we are to believe that the fragment of a ſermon, which he produced as Rowley's, was really his own compoſition, certainly many a quack preacher ſets out upon a much ſlenderer ſtock of divinity than Chatterton was maſter of at that time. The imagination, however, forms many ſchemes which the heart wants fortitude to reduce to action; and perhaps, after all, his declaration to Mr. T. might be no more than a temporary piece of gaiety, and that he might ſtill, though releaſed from religious ſcruples, abhor the diſhonourable character of a hypocrite.

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might be apprehenſive of expoſing himſelf to puniſhment.

At twelve years old he was confirmed by the Biſhop: His ſiſter adds, that he made very ſenſible and ſerious remarks on the awfulneſs of the ceremony, and on his own feelings preparatory to it *. Happy had it been for him if theſe ſentiments, ſo congenial to the amiable diſpoſitions of youth, had continued to influence his conduct during his maturer years. He ſoon after, during the week in which he was door-keeper, made ſome verſes on the laſt day, paraphraſed the ninth chapter of Job, and ſome chapters of Iſaiah. The bent of his genius, however, more ſtrongly inclined him to ſatire, of which he was tolerably laviſh on his ſchool-fellows, nor did the upper-maſter, Mr. Warner, eſcape the rod of his reprehenſion. The firſt

* Mrs. Newton's Letter.

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poetical eſſays of moſt young authors are in the paſtoral ſtyle, when the imagination is luxuriant, the hopes and contemplations romantic, and when the mind is better acquainted with the objects of nature and of the ſight than with any other; but Chatterton, without the advantages of education or encouragement, and, on theſe accounts, diffident perhaps of his own powers, wanted the ſtimulative of indignation to prompt him to action; and a quickneſs of reſentment appears through life to have been one of his moſt diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics *. From what has been related, it is probable that Chatterton was no great favourite with Mr. Warner; he, however, found a friend in the under-

* A late French writer, in his Memoirs of the poet De la Harpe, who had manifeſted a like turn for ſatire in his early years, ſays—"La ſatyre eſt la premiere qualité qui ſe develope ordinairement dans un jeune poete. Celui ſe l'exerce d'unefaçon ridicule envers ſes maitres & meme envers M. Aſſalin."

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under-master, Mr. Haynes, who conceived for him, I have been informed, a strong and affectionate attachment.

A very remarkable fact is recorded by Mr. Thistlethwaite in the letter already quoted. "Going down Horse-street, near the school, one day," says he, "I accidentally met with Chatterton. Entering into conversation with him, the subject of which I do not now recollect, he informed me that he was in the possession of certain old manuscripts, which had been found deposited in a chest in Redcliffe church, and that he had lent some or one of them to Philips. Within a day or two after this I saw Philips, and repeated to him the information I had received from Chatterton. Philips produced a manuscript on parchment or vellum, which I am confident was Elenoure and Juga *, a kind

* See Rowley's Poems, p. 19, third edition.

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a kind of paſtoral eclogue, afterwards publiſhed in the Town and Country Magazine for May 1769. The parchment or vellum appeared to have been cloſely pared round the margin; for what purpoſe, or by what accident, I know not, but the words were evidently entire and unmutilated. As the writing was yellow and pale, manifeſtly (as I conceive) occaſioned by age, and conſequently difficult to decypher, Philips had with his pen traced and gone over ſeveral of the lines, (which, as far as my recollection ſerves, were written in the manner of proſe, and without any regard to punctuation,) and by that means laboured to attain the object of his purſuit, an inveſtigation of their meaning. I endeavoured to aſſiſt him; but from an almoſt total ignorance of the characters, manners, language, and orthography of the age in which the lines were written, all our efforts were unprofitably

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exerted; and though we arrived at the explanation of, and connected many of the words, ſtill the ſenſe was notoriouſly deficient *." If this narrative may be depended on, Chatterton had diſcovered theſe manuſcripts before he was twelve years of age. It is, however, ſcarcely conſiſtent with other accounts, ſince both Mrs. Chatterton and her daughter ſeem to be of opinion, that he knew nothing of the parchments brought from Redcliffe church, which were ſuppoſed to contain Rowley's poems, till after he had left ſchool †.

Under all the diſadvantages of education, the acquiſitions of Chatterton were ſurpriſing. Beſides the variety of reading which he had gone through, the author of Love and Madneſs remarks, he had ſome

* Milles's Rowley.

† Milles's Prelim. Diſſ. p. 5. There appears good reaſon for ſuſpecting ſome miſtake in Mr. Thiſtlethwaite's narrative, either as to the date, or ſome other circumſtance.

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knowledge of muſic *.—Is it not probable that a few of the rudiments of vocal muſic made a part of the education of a charity boy? He had alſo acquired a taſte for drawing, which afterwards he greatly improved; and the uſher of the ſchool aſſerted he had made a rapid progreſs in arithmetic †. Soon after he left ſchool, he correſponded with a boy, who had been his bed-fellow while at Colſton's, and was bound apprentice to a merchant at New-York ‡. Mrs. Newton ſays, he read a letter at home, which he wrote to this friend; it conſiſted of a collection of all the hard words in the Engliſh language, and he requeſted his friend to anſwer it in the

* Love and Madneſs, p. 167.

† Ibid. p. 161.

‡ At the deſire of this friend, he wrote love verſes to be tranſmitted to him, and exhibited as his own. It is remarkable, that when firſt queſtioned concerning the old poems, he ſaid he was engaged to tranſcribe them for a gentleman, who alſo employed him to write verſes on a lady with whom he was in love.

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the ſame ſtyle. An extraordinary effect of his diſcovering an employment adapted to his genius is remarked in the ſame letter. He had been gloomy from the time he began to learn, but it was obſerved that he became more cheerful after he began to write poetry *.

On the 1ſt of July 1767, he left the charity-ſchool, and was bound apprentice to Mr. John Lambert, attorney, of Briſtol, for ſeven years, to learn the art and myſtery of a ſcrivener. The apprentice fee was ten pounds; the maſter was to find him in meat, drink, lodging, and clothes; the mother in waſhing and mending. He ſlept in the ſame room with the foot-boy, and went every morning at eight o'clock to the office, which was at ſome diſtance, and, except the uſual time for dinner, continued there till eight o'clock at night,

† Miller's Prelim. Diſſ. p. 5.

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after which he was at liberty till ten, when he was always expected to be at home. Mr. Lambert affords the moſt honourable teſtimony in Chatterton's favour, with reſpect to the regularity of his attendance, as he never exceeded the limited hours but once, when he had leave to ſpend the evening with his mother and ſome friends *. His hours of leiſure alſo Mr. Lambert had no reaſon to ſuſpect were ſpent in improper company, but generally with his mother, Mr. Clayfield, Mr. Barrett, or Mr. Catcott. He never had occaſion to charge him with neglect of buſineſs, or any ill behaviour whatever. Once, and but once, he thought himſelf under the neceſſity of correcting him, and that was the pure effect of his diſpoſition for ſatire. A ſhort time after he was bound to Mr. Lambert, his old ſchoolmaſter received a very

* Mrs. Newton's Letter above quoted.

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very abuſive anonymous letter, which he ſuſpected came from Chatterton, and he complained of it to his maſter, who was ſoon convinced of the juſtice of the complaint, not only from the hand-writing, which was ill-diſguiſed *, but from the letter being written on the ſame paper with that which was uſed in the office. On this occaſion Mr. Lambert corrected the boy with a blow or two. He, however, accuſes him of a ſullen and gloomy temper, which particularly diſplayed itſelf among the ſervants †. Chatterton's ſuperior abilities, and ſuperior information, with the pride which uſually accompanies theſe qualities, doubtleſs rendered him an unfit inhabitant of the kitchen, where his ignorant

* This circumſtance is not unworthy of notice. If Chatterton was really the forger of the MSS. attributed to Rowley, how came he in this inſtance to be unable to diſguiſe his own hand-writing?

† From the information of Mr. Lambert to a friend of the author.

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ignorant aſſociates would naturally be inclined to envy, and would affect to deſpiſe thoſe accompliſhments, which he held in the higheſt eſtimation; and even the familiarity of vulgar and illiterate perſons, muſt undoubtedly be rather diſguſting than agreeable to a mind like his.

Mr. Lambert's was a ſituation not unfavourable to the cultivation of his genius. Though much confined, he had much leiſure. His maſter's buſineſs conſumed a very ſmall portion of his time; frequently, his ſiſter ſays, it did not engage him above two hours in a day *. While Mr. Lambert was from home, and no particular buſineſs interfered, his ſtated employment was to copy precedents; a book of which, containing 344 large folio pages, cloſely written by Chatterton while he remained in the office, is, I believe, ſtill in the poſſeſſion of Mr. Lambert, as well

* Mrs. Newton's Letter above quoted.

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well as another of about 30 pages. The office library contained nothing but law books; except an old edition of Cambden's Britannia. There is no doubt, however, but Chatterton took care amply to ſupply his mental wants from his old acquaintance at the circulating libraries.

He had continued this courſe of life for upwards of a year; not, however, without ſome ſymptoms of an averſion for his profeſſion, before he began to attract the notice of the literary world. In the beginning of October 1768, the new bridge at Briſtol was finiſhed; at that time there appeared, in Farley's Briſtol Journal, an account of the ceremonies on opening the old bridge, introduced by a letter to the printer, intimating that "The following deſcription of *the Fryars firſt paſſing over the old bridge*, was taken from an ancient manuſcript," and ſigned "Dunhelmus Briſtolien-

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toliensis *." The paper, if it be allowed to be the fabrication of modern times, demonstrates strong powers of invention, and an uncommon knowledge of ancient cus-

toms.

* " Description of the Fryars passing over the Old Bridge, " taken from an ancient manuscript.

" On Fridaie was the time fixed for passing the new-
" brydge. Aboute the time of tollynge the tenth clocke,
" Master Greggoire Dalbenye mounted on a fergreyne
" horse, informed Master Maier all thynges were pre-
" pared, when two Beadils went first streying stre. Next
" came a manne dressed up as follows, hose of gootskyne
" crinepart outwards, doublette & waiscot, also over which
" a white robe without sleeves, much like an albe but not
" so long, reachinge but to his hands. A girdle of azure
" over his left shoulder, rechede also to his hands on the
" right & doubled back to his left, bucklynge with a goulden
" buckle dangled to his knee, thereby representinge a Saxon
" earlderman.

" In his hands he bare a shield, the maistre of Gille a
" Brogton, who painted the same, representing Sainte
" Warburgh crossing the foorde; then a mickle strong man
" in armour, carried a huge anlace, after whom came six
" claryons & six minstrels, who song the song of Sainte
" Warburgh. Then came Master Maier mounted on a
" white horse dight with sable trappyngs wrought about by
" the Nunnes of Saint Kenna, with gould and Silver, his
" hayre braded with ribbons & a chaperon with the auntient
" armes of Bristowe fastened on his forehead. Master Mair
" bare in his hande a goulden rodde, & a congean squire

" bare

toms. So ſingular a memoir could not fail to excite curioſity, and many perſons became anxious to ſee the original. The printer, Mr. Farley, could give no account of

" bare in his hande, his helmet waulkinge by the ſyde of
" the horſe. Then came the earlderman & city broders,
" mounted on ſabyell horſes dyght with white trappyngs &
" plumes & ſcarlet caps & chaperons having thereon ſable
" plumes; after them, the preeſts & frears, pariſh mendicant
" & ſecular, ſome ſyngynge Sainte Warburghs ſonge,
" others ſoundynge clarions thereto & others ſome citri-
" alles.

" In thilke manner reachynge the brydge the manne
" with the anlace ſtode on the fyrſt top of a mounde, yreed
" in the midſt of the brydge, than went up the manne
" with the ſheelde, after him the minſtrels & clarions;
" and then the preeſtes & freeres all in white albes,
" making a moſt goodly ſhewe, the maier & earldermen
" ſtandinge rounde, they ſonge with the ſound of claryons,
" the ſonge of Sainte Baldwyne, which being done, the
" manne on the top threw with great myght his anlace into
" the ſea & the clarions ſounded an auncient charge &
" forloyne. Then theie ſong again the ſong of Sainte
" Warburge, & proceeded up Xts hill to the croſſe,
" where a Latin ſermon was preached by Ralph de Blun-
" derville, & with ſound of clarion theye againe want to the
" brydge and there dined, ſpendynge the reſt of the daye
" in ſports and plaies, the freers of Sainte Auguſtyne doing
" the play of the knights of Briſtow meekynge a great fire
" at night on Kynſlate hill."

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of it, nor of the perſon who brought the copy; but after much inquiry, it was diſcovered that the manuſcript was brought by a youth between fifteen and ſixteen years of age, of the name of Thomas Chatterton *. "To the threats of thoſe who treated him (agreeably to his appearance) as a child, he returned nothing but haughtineſs, and a refuſal to give any account †." By milder uſage he was ſomewhat ſoftened, and appeared inclined to give all the information in his power. He at firſt alledged, that he was employed to tranſcribe the contents of certain ancient manuſcripts by a gentleman, who alſo had engaged him to furniſh complimentary verſes, inſcribed to a lady with whom that gentleman was in love. On being further preſſed, he at laſt informed the inquirers, that he had received the paper in queſtion, together with many other manuſcripts, from his father,

* Preface to Rowley's Poems.

† Croft's Love and Madneſs, p. 145.

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father, who had found them in a large cheſt in the upper room over the chapel, on the north ſide of Redcliffe church *. But a ſtill more circumſtantial account of the diſcovery of theſe manuſcripts, is preſerved in Mr. Bryant's Obſervations on Rowley's Poems. Over the north porch of St. Mary Redcliffe church, which was founded, or at leaſt rebuilt, by Mr. W. Canynge, (an eminent merchant of Briſtol in the 15th century, and in the reign of Edward the Fourth,) there is a kind of muniment room, in which were depoſited ſix or ſeven cheſts, one of which in particular was called *Mr. Canynge's cofre* †; this cheſt, it is ſaid, was ſecured by ſix keys,

* See Mr. Catcott's account in the preface to Rowley's poems.

† When rents were received and kept in ſpecie, it was uſual for corporate bodies to keep the writings and rents of eſtates left for particular purpoſes, in cheſts appropriated to each particular benefaction, and called by the benefactor's name; ſeveral old cheſts of this kind are ſtill exiſting in the Univerſity of Cambridge. O.

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keys, two of which were entruſted to the miniſter and procurator of the church, two to the mayor, and one to each of the church-wardens. In proceſs of time, however, the ſix keys appear to have been loſt; and about the year 1727, a notion prevailed that ſome title deeds, and other writings of value, were contained in Mr. Canynge's cofre. In conſequence of this opinion, an order of veſtry was made, that the cheſt ſhould be opened under the inſpection of an attorney; and that thoſe writings which appeared of conſequence, ſhould be removed to the ſouth porch of the church. The locks were therefore forced, and not only the principal cheſt, but the others, which were alſo ſuppoſed to contain writings, were all broken open. The deeds immediately relating to the church were removed, and the other manuſcripts were left expoſed as of no value. Conſiderable depredations had, from time

to

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to time, been committed upon them, by different perſons; but the moſt inſatiate of theſe plunderers was the father of Chatterton. His uncle being ſexton of St. Mary Redcliffe gave him free acceſs to the church. He carried off, from time to time, parcels of the parchments, and one time alone, with the aſſiſtance of his boys, is known to have filled a large baſket with them. They were depoſited in a cupboard in the ſchool, and employed for different purpoſes, ſuch as the covering of copy books, &c.; in particular, Mr. Gibbs, the miniſter of the pariſh, having preſented the boys with twenty bibles, Mr. Chatterton, in order to preſerve theſe books from being damaged, covered them with ſome of the parchments. At his death, the widow being under a neceſſity of removing, carried the remainder of them to her own habitation. Of the diſcovery of their value by the younger Chatterton,

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the account of Mr. Smith, a very intimate acquaintance, which he gave to Dr. Glynn of Cambridge, is too intereſting to be omitted. "When young Chatterton was firſt articled to Mr. Lambert, he uſed frequently to come home to his mother, by way of a ſhort viſit. There, one day, his eye was caught by one of theſe parchments, which had been converted into a thread-paper. He found not only the writing to be very old, the characters very different from common characters, but that the ſubject therein treated was different from common ſubjects. Being naturally of an inquiſitive and curious turn, he was very much ſtruck with their appearance, and, as might be expected, began to queſtion his mother what thoſe thread-papers were, how ſhe got them, and whence they came. Upon farther enquiry, he was led to a full diſcovery of all the parchments

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ments which remained *;" the bulk of them conſiſted of poetical and other compoſitions, by Mr. Canynge, and a particular friend of his, Thomas Rowley, whom Chatterton at firſt called a monk, and afterwards a ſecular prieſt of the fifteenth century. Such, at leaſt, appears to be the account which Chatterton thought proper to give, and which he wiſhed to be believed. It is, indeed, confirmed by the teſtimony of his mother and ſiſter. Mrs. Chatterton informed a friend of the Dean of Exeter, that on her removal from Pyle-ſtreet, ſhe emptied the cupboard of its contents, partly into a large long deal box, where her huſband uſed to keep his clothes, and partly into a ſquare oak box of a ſmaller ſize; carrying both with their contents to her lodgings, where, according to her account, they continued neglected

* Bryant's Obſervations, p. 511—529.

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and undiſturbed, till her ſon firſt diſcovered their value; who having examined their contents, told his mother, 'that he had found a treaſure, and was ſo glad nothing could be like it.' That he then removed all theſe parchments out of the large long deal box, in which his father uſed to keep his clothes, into the ſquare oak box: That he was perpetually ranſacking every corner of the houſe for more parchments, and, from time to time, carried away thoſe he had already found by pockets full: That one day happening to ſee Clarke's Hiſtory of the Bible covered with one of thoſe parchments, he ſwore a great oath, and ſtripping the book, put the cover into his pocket, and carried it away; at the ſame time ſtripping a common little Bible, but finding no writing upon the cover, replaced it again very leiſurely *.

"Upon

* Milles's Prelim. Diſſ p. 7. It does not appear that any of the parchments exhibited to Mr. Barrett, or Mr. Catcott,

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"Upon being informed of the manner in which his father had procured the parchments, he went himſelf to the place, and picked up four more, which, if Mrs. Chatterton rightly remembers, Mr. Barrett has at this time in his poſſeſſion *."

"Mrs. Newton, his ſiſter, being aſked, if ſhe remembers his having mentioned Rowley's poems, after the diſcovery of the parchments; ſays, that he was perpetually talking on that ſubject, and once in particular, (about two years before he left Briſtol) when a relation, one Mr. Stephens of Saliſbury, made them a viſit, he talked of nothing elſe †."

Nearly about the time when the paper in Farley's Journal, concerning the old bridge, became the ſubject of converſation,

Catcott, were of a ſize ſufficient for a covering for an octavo book, much leſs for a quarto or folio. O.

* Milles's Prelim. Diſſ. p. 7.

† Ibid.

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as Mr. Catcott of Briſtol, a gentleman of an inquiſitive turn, and fond of reading, was walking with a friend in Redcliffe church, he was informed by him of ſeveral ancient pieces of poetry, which had been found there, and which were in the poſſeſſion of a young perſon with whom he was acquainted. This perſon proved to be Chatterton, to whom Mr. Catcott deſired to be introduced. He accordingly had an interview; and ſoon after obtained from him, very readily, without any reward, the Briſtow Tragedy *, Rowley's Epitaph upon Mr. Canynge's anceſtor †, with ſome other ſmaller pieces. In a few days he brought ſome more, among which was *the Yellow Roll*. About this period, Mr. Barrett, a reſpectable ſurgeon in Briſtol, and a man of letters, had projected a hiſtory of his native city, and was anxiouſly

* See Rowley's Poems, p. 44.
† Ibid. p. 277.

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ouſly collecting materials for that work. Such a diſcovery, therefore, as that of Chatterton, could ſcarcely eſcape the vigilance of Mr. Barrett's friends. The pieces in Mr. Catcott's poſſeſſion, of which ſome were copies and ſome originals, were immediately communicated to Mr. Barrett, whoſe friendſhip and patronage by theſe means our young literary adventurer was fortunate enough to ſecure. During the firſt converſations which Mr. Catcott had with him, he heard him mention the names of moſt of the poems ſince printed, as being in his poſſeſſion. He afterwards grew more ſuſpicious and reſerved; and it was but rarely, and with difficulty, that any more originals could be obtained from him. He confeſſed to Mr. Catcott that he had deſtroyed ſeveral; and ſome which he owned to have been in his poſſeſſion, were never afterwards ſeen. One of theſe was the tragedy of the Apoſtate,

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of which a ſmall part only has been preſerved by Mr. Barrett. The ſubject of it was the apoſtatizing of a perſon from the Chriſtian to the Jewiſh faith *. Mr. Barrett, however, obtained from him at different times ſeveral fragments, ſome of them of a conſiderable length; they are all written upon vellum, and he aſſerted them to be a part of the original manuſcripts, which he had obtained in the manner which has been already related. A *fac ſimile* of one of theſe fragments is publiſhed in Mr. Tyrwhitt's and Dr. Milles's editions of Rowley's Poems; and the fragments in proſe, which are conſiderably larger, we are taught to expect in Mr. Barrett's Hiſtory of Briſtol. In the ſame work we are alſo promiſed "*A Diſcorſe on Briſtowe*, and the other hiſtorical pieces in proſe, which Chatterton at different times delivered

* Bryant's Obſervations, p. 517.

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livered out, as copied from Rowley's manuſcripts *."

The friendſhip of Mr. Barrett and Mr. Catcott was of conſiderable advantage to Chatterton. They ſupplied him occaſionally with money, as a compenſation for ſome of the fragments of Rowley, with which he gratified them †. He ſpent many agreeable hours in their company; and their acquaintance introduced him into a more reſpectable line than he could eaſily have attained without it. His ſiſter remarks, that after he was introduced to theſe gentlemen, his ambition daily and perceptibly encreaſed; and he would frequently

* Preface to Rowley's Poems, p. 11. It is now ſaid that Mr. B. does not mean to inſert any of theſe pieces in his Hiſtory.

† Some of his later compoſitions, however, demonſtrate, that he was not thoroughly ſatisfied with his Briſtol patrons; and Mr. Thiſtlethwaite does not heſitate to aſſert, that he felt himſelf greatly diſappointed in his expectations of pecuniary rewards for his communications. K.

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quently ſpeak in raptures of the undoubted ſucceſs of his plan for future life. "When in ſpirits, he would enjoy his riſing fame, and, confident of advancement, he would promiſe his mother and I ſhould be partakers of his ſucceſs *." Both theſe gentlemen alſo lent him books; Mr. Barrett lent him ſeveral medical authors †, and, at his requeſt, gave him ſome inſtructions in ſurgery. His taſte was verſatile, and his ſtudies various. In the courſe of the years 1768 and 1769, Mr. Thiſtlethwaite frequently ſaw him, and deſcribes in a lively manner the employment of his leiſure hours. "One day," ſays Mr. T. "he might be found buſily employed in the ſtudy of heraldry and Engliſh antiquities, both of which are numbered among the moſt favourite of his purſuits;

* Mrs. Newton's letter before quoted.

† Ibid.

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purſuits; the next diſcovered him deeply engaged, confounded and perplexed amidſt the ſubtleties of metaphyſical diſquiſition, or loſt and bewildered in the abſtruſe labyrinth of mathematical reſearches; and theſe in an inſtant again neglected and thrown aſide, to make room for muſic and aſtronomy, of both which ſciences his knowledge was entirely confined to theory. Even phyſic was not without a charm to allure his imagination, and he would talk of Galen, Hippocrates, and Paracelſus, with all the confidence and familiarity of a modern empirick *." It may naturally be ſuppoſed, that his acquaintance with moſt of theſe ſciences was very ſuperficial; but his knowledge of antiquities was extenſive, and we might perhaps ſay profound. With a view of perfecting himſelf in theſe favourite ſtudies, he borrowed Skinner's Etymologicon

* Milles's Rowley, p. 456.

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Etymologicon of Mr. Barrett, but returned it in a few days as uſeleſs, moſt of the interpretations being in Latin. He alſo borrowed Benſon's Saxon Vocabulary, but returned it immediately on the ſame account *. His diſappointment was partly compenſated by the acquiſition of Kerſey's Dictionary, and Speght's Chaucer, (the Gloſſary to which he carefully tranſcribed †.) With theſe books he was furniſhed by Mr. Green, a bookſeller in Briſtol. Probably the mortification he received at not being able to make that uſe which he deſired of Skinner and of Benſon, might be an additional ſtimulative to the great inclination which he manifeſted to acquaint himſelf with Latin, and his deſign to attempt it without a maſter. From this project his friend, Mr. Smith, took great pains to diſſuade him,

* Bryant's Obſerv. p. 532.

† Milles's Prelim. Diſſ. p. 5, and 17.

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him, and adviſed him rather to apply to French, a competent knowledge of which might be ſooner attained, and which promiſed to be of more eſſential ſervice*. Whatever plan he adopted, he entered upon it with an earneſtneſs and fervour almoſt unexampled. Indeed, the poetic enthuſiaſm was never more ſtrongly exhibited than in Chatterton. Like Milton, he fancied he was more capable of writing well at ſome particular times than at others, and the full of the moon was the ſeaſon when he imagined his genius to be in perfection; at which period, as if the immediate preſence of that luminary added to the inſpiration, he frequently devoted a conſiderable portion of the night to compoſition†.—"He was always," ſays Mr. Smith, "extremely fond of walking in the fields, particularly in Redcliffe meadows, and of talking about theſe (Row-

* Bryant's Obſerv. p. 532.

† Mrs. Newton's letter to Mr. C.

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(Rowley's) manuſcripts, and ſometimes reading them there. "Come (he would "ſay) you and I will take a walk in the "meadow. I have got the cleverest thing "for you imaginable. It is worth half-"a-crown merely to have a ſight of it, "and to hear me read it to you." When we arrived at the place propoſed, he would produce his parchment, ſhew it and read it to me. There was one ſpot in particular, full in view of the church, in which he ſeemed to take a peculiar delight. He would frequently lay himſelf down, fix his eyes upon the church, and ſeem as if he were in a kind of trance. Then, on a ſudden and abruptly, he would tell me, "that ſteeple was burnt down by light-"ning: that was the place where they "formerly acted plays *." His Sundays were commonly ſpent in walking alone into the country about Briſtol, as far as the duration

* Bryant's Obſerv. p. 530.

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duration of day-light would allow; and from theſe excurſions he never failed to bring home with him drawings of churches, or of ſome other objects, which had impreſſed his romantic imagination *.

His attention, while at Briſtol, was not confined to Rowley; his pen was exerciſed in a variety of pieces, chiefly ſatirical, and ſeveral eſſays, both in proſe and verſe, which he ſent to the Magazines. I have not been able to trace any thing of Chatterton's in the Town and Country Magazine (with which he appears to have firſt correſponded) before February 1769; but in the acknowledgments to correſpondents for November 1768, we find "D. B. of Briſtol's favour will be gladly received."

Dunhelmus

* Love and Madneſs, p. 159. The Dean of Exeter mentions drawings by Rowley of Briſtol Caſtle, which he ſuppoſes genuine, but which Mr. Warton reprobates as fictions of Chatterton, the repreſentations of a building which never exiſted, in a capricious, affected ſtyle of Gothic architecture, reducible to no ſyſtem. O.

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Dunhelmus Briſtolienſis was the ſignature he generally employed. In the courſe of the year 1769, he was a conſiderable contributor to that publication. One of the firſt of his pieces which appeared was a letter on the tinctures of the Saxon heralds, dated Briſtol, February 4; and in the ſame Magazine a poem was inſerted on Mr. Alcock, of Briſtol, an excellent miniature painter, ſigned *Aſaphides* *. In the ſame Magazine for March are ſome extracts from Rowley's manuſcripts; and in different numbers for the ſucceeding months, ſome pieces called Saxon poems, written in the ſtyle of Oſſian.

The whole of Chatterton's life preſents a fund of uſeful inſtruction to young perſons of brilliant and lively talents, and affords a ſtrong diſſuaſive againſt that impetuoſity

* This piece, with two or three others in Chatterton's Miſcellanies, was claimed by John Lockſtone, a linen-draper in Briſtol, a great friend of Chatterton; by his confeſſion, however, it was corrected by the latter.

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petuoſity of expectation, and thoſe deluſive hopes of ſucceſs, founded upon the conſciouſneſs of genius and merit, which lead them to neglect the ordinary means of acquiring competence and independence. The early diſguſt which Chatterton conceived for his profeſſion, may be accounted one of the prime ſources of his misfortunes. Among the efforts which he made to extricate himſelf from this irkſome ſituation, the moſt remarkable is his application to the Hon. Horace Walpole, in March 1769 *; the ground of which was an offer to furniſh him with ſome accounts of a ſeries of great painters, who had flouriſhed at Briſtol, which Chatterton ſaid had been lately diſcovered, with ſome old poems, in that city. The pacquet ſent by Chatterton was left at Bathurſt's, Mr. Walpole's bookſeller, and contained, beſide

* Two Letters by the Honourable Horace Walpole, P. 55.

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this letter, an ode or little poem, of two or three ſtanzas in alternate rhyme, on the death of Richard I. as a ſpecimen of the poems which were found. Mr. Walpole had but juſt before been made the inſtrument of introducing into the world Mr. M'Pherſon's forgeries; a ſimilar application, therefore, ſerved at once to awaken his ſuſpicion. He, however, anſwered Chatterton's letter, deſiring further information; and in reply, was informed, that "he (Chatterton) was the ſon of a poor widow, who ſupported him with great difficulty; that he was apprentice to an attorney, but had a taſte for more elegant ſtudies." The letter hinted a wiſh that Mr. Walpole would aſſiſt him in emerging from ſo dull a profeſſion, by procuring ſome place, in which he might purſue the natural bias of his genius. He affirmed that great treaſures of ancient poetry had been diſcovered at Briſtol, and were in the hands of a perſon who had lent him the ſpecimen

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men already tranſmitted, as well as a paſtoral (Elinoure and Juga) which accompanied this ſecond letter. Mr. Walpole wrote to a friend, a noble lady at Bath, to enquire after the author of theſe letters, who found his account of himſelf verified in every particular. In the mean time the ſpecimens were communicated to Mr. Gray and Mr. Maſon, and thoſe gentlemen, at firſt ſight, pronounced them forgeries. Mr. Walpole, though convinced of the author's intention to impoſe upon him, could not, as he himſelf confeſſes, help admiring the ſpirit of poetry which animated theſe compoſitions. The teſtimonies of his approbation, however, were too cold to produce in Chatterton any thing but laſting diſguſt. Mr. Walpole's reply was indeed (according to his own account) rather too much in the common-place ſtyle of Court replies; though ſome allowance is to be made for

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his peculiar ſituation, and for his juſt apprehenſion of a new impoſition to be practiſed on him. He complained in general terms of his want of power to be a patron, and adviſed the young man to apply himſelf to the duties of his profeſſion, as more certain means of attaining the independence and leiſure of which he was deſirous. This frigid reception extracted immediately from Chatterton, "a peeviſh letter," deſiring the manuſcripts back, as they were the property of another; and Mr. Walpole, either offended at the warm and independent ſpirit which was manifeſted by the boy, or pleaſed to be diſengaged from the buſineſs in ſo eaſy a manner, proceeded on a journey to Paris, without taking any further notice of him. On his return, which was not for ſome time, he found another epiſtle from Chatterton, in a ſtyle (as he terms it) "ſingularly impertinent;" expreſſive of much reſentment

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ment on account of the detention of his poems, roughly demanding them back, and adding, "that Mr. Walpole would not have *dared* to uſe him ſo ill, had he not been acquainted with the narrowneſs of his circumſtances." The conſequence was, therefore, ſuch as might be expected. Mr. Walpole returned his poems and his letters in a blank cover, and never afterwards heard from him or of him during his life *. The affront was never forgiven by the diſappointed poet, though it is perhaps more than repaid by the ridiculous portrait which he has exhibited of Mr. W———, in the Memoirs of a Sad Dog, under the character of "the redoubted Baron Otranto †, who has ſpent his whole life in conjectures."

On the ſcore of theſe tranſactions, Mr. Walpole has incurred more cenſure than

* Ib. paſſim.

† Chat. Miſcel. p. 184.

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he really deſerved. In an age when literature is ſo little patronized by thoſe who wield all the powers of the ſtate, and have in truſt for the public the diſtribution of its emoluments; when men of the firſt abilities, actually engaged in the learned profeſſions, are permitted to languiſh in obſcurity and poverty, without any of thoſe rewards, which are *appropriated* to the profeſſions they exerciſe, and are compelled to depend for a precarious ſubſiſtence on the ſcanty pittance, which they derive from diurnal drudgery in the ſervice of bookſellers, it can ſcarcely be deemed an inſtance of extraordinary illiberality that a private man, though a man of fortune, ſhould be inattentive to the petition of a perfect ſtranger, a young man, whoſe birth or education entitled him to no high pretenſions, and who had only conceived an unreaſonable diſlike to a profeſſion both lucrative and reſpectable. If Chatterton

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had actually avowed the poems, perhaps a very generous and feeling heart, ſuch as rarely exiſts at preſent, and leaſt of all in the higher circles of life, might have been more ſtrongly affected with their beauties, and might probably have extended ſome ſmall degree of encouragement. But conſidering things as they are, and not as they ought to be, it was a degree of unuſual condeſcenſion to take any notice whatever of the application; and when Chatterton felt ſo poignantly his diſappointment, he only demonſtrated his ignorance of the ſtate of patronage in this country, and acted like a young and ingenuous perſon, who judged of the feelings of courtiers by the generous emotions of his own breaſt, or the practice of times, which exiſt now only in the records of romance. Mr. Walpole afterwards regretted, and I believe ſincerely, that he had not ſeen this extraordinary youth, and that he did not pay a

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more favourable attention to his correſpondence; but, to be neglected in life, and regretted and admired when theſe paſſions can be no longer of ſervice, has been the uſual fate of learning and genius. Mr. Walpole was certainly under no obligation of patronizing Chatterton. To have encouraged and befriended him, would have been an exertion of liberality and munificence uncommon in the preſent day; but to aſcribe to Mr. Walpole's neglect (if it can even merit ſo harſh an appellation) the dreadful cataſtrophe, which happened at the diſtance of nearly two years after, would be the higheſt degree of injuſtice and abſurdity *.

The

* A learned and reſpectable friend, on reading theſe memoirs in manuſcript, favoured me with the following able vindication of Mr. W. which, for the ſatisfaction of thoſe who wiſh for the fulleſt information on the ſubject, I inſert intire.

It has already been ſtated, that, in March 1769, Chatterton, not long after his acquaintance with Mr. Barrett and

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The reader has hitherto contemplated Chatterton in the pleaſing light of an ingenious

and Mr. Catcott, to whom he had communicated ſome originals and ſome tranſcripts of Rowley's Poems, wrote a letter to Mr. H. Walpole, incloſing alſo a ſpecimen of the poems, and ſoliciting his patronage. Let the reader take the account in Mr. Walpole's own words, from an extract of a letter to Mr. W. B.ᵉ added to another letter to the Editor of Chatterton's Miſcellanies, and printed at Strawberry-hill, 1779.

" I am far from determined to publiſh any thing about " Chatterton. It would almoſt look like making myſelf a " party. I do not love controverſy; if I print, my chief " reaſon would be, that both in the account of the poems, " and in Mr. Warton's laſt volume, my name has been " brought in with ſo little circumſpection and accuracy, " that it looks as if my rejection of Chatterton had driven " him to deſpair; whereas I was the firſt perſon on whom " he eſſayed his art and ambition, inſtead of being the " laſt. I never ſaw him; there was an interval of near two " years between his application to me and his diſmal end; " nor had he quitted his maſter, nor was neceſſitous, nor " otherwiſe poor than attornies clerks uſually are; nor had " he come to London, nor launched into diſſipation, when " his correſpondence with me ſtopped. As faithfully as I " can recollect the circumſtances, without dates, and " without ſearching for what few memorandums I pre- " ſerved relative to him, I will recapitulate his hiſtory " with me. Bathurſt, my bookſeller, brought me a " pacquet left with him; it contained an ode, or little " poem,

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nious and virtuous youth. I reluctantly proceed to develope the only circumſtance which

" poem, of two or three ſtanzas in alternate rhyme, on the " death of Richard the Firſt, and I was told, in very few " lines, that it had been found at Briſtol, with many other " old poems, and that the poſſeſſor could furniſh me with " accounts of a ſeries of great painters, who had flouriſhed " at Briſtol.

" Here I muſt pauſe, to mention my own reflections. " At firſt I concluded that ſomebody having met with my " Anecdotes of Painting, had a mind to laugh at me; I " thought not very ingenuouſly, as I was not likely to " ſwallow a ſucceſſion of great painters at Briſtol. The " ode, or ſonnet*, as I think it was called, was too pretty " to be part of the plan; and, as is eaſy with all the other " ſuppoſed poems of Rowley, it was not difficult to make it " modern by changing the old words for new, though yet " more difficult than with moſt of them. You ſee I tell you " fairly the caſe.

" I wrote, according to the incloſed direction, for farther " particulars. Chatterton, in anſwer, informed me that " he was the ſon of a poor widow, who ſupported him with " great difficulty; that he was clerk or apprentice to an at- " torney, but had a taſte and turn for more elegant ſtudies; " and hinted a wiſh that I would aſſiſt him with my intereſt " in emerging out of ſo dull a profeſſion, by procuring " him ſome place, in which he could purſue his natural " bent. He affirmed that great treaſures of ancient poetry " had

* " Richard of Lyon's Heart to fight is gone."

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which has involved his name and character in disgrace, and which certainly deprived

"had been discovered in his native city, and were in the "hands of a *person*, who had lent him those he had trans- "mitted to me; for he now sent me others, amongst which "was an absolute modern pastoral in dialogue, thinly "sprinkled with old words *. Pray observe, Sir, that he "affirmed having received the poems from another person; "whereas it is ascertained that the gentleman at Bristol, "who possesses the fund of Rowley's poems, received them "from Chatterton.

"I wrote to a relation of mine at Bath, to enquire into "the situation and character of Chatterton, according to "his own account of himself; nothing was returned about "his character, but his story was verified.

"In the mean time I communicated the poems to Mr. "Gray and Mr. Mason, who at once pronounced them "forgeries, and declared there was no symptom in them of "their being the productions of near so distant an age; the "language and metres being totally unlike any thing an- "cient.

"Well, Sir, being satisfied with my intelligence about "Chatterton, I wrote him a letter with as much kindness "and tenderness as if I had been his guardian; for though "I had no doubt of his impositions, such a spirit of poetry "breathed in his coinage, as interested me for him; nor "was it a grave crime in a young bard to have forged false "notes of hand, that were to pass current only in the parish "of

* Elinoure and Juga.

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prived the world prematurely of his excellent abilities. When or how he was unfortunate

" of Parnaſſus. I undeceived him about my being a perſon " of any intereſt, and urged, that in duty and gratitude to " his mother, who had ſtraitened herſelf to breed him up to " a profeſſion, he ought to labour in it, that in her old age " he might abſolve his filial debt; and I told him, that " when he ſhould have made a fortune, he might unbend " himſelf with the ſtudies conſonant to his inclinations. I " told him alſo, that I had communicated his tranſcripts to " better judges, and that they were by no means ſatisfied " with the authenticity of his ſuppoſed MSS. He wrote " me rather a peeviſh anſwer, ſaid he could not conteſt with " a perſon of my learning, (a compliment by no means due " to me, and which I certainly had not aſſumed, having " mentioned my having conſulted abler judges,) main- " tained the genuineneſs of the poems, and demanded to " have them returned, *as they were the property of another* " *gentleman*. Remember this.

" When I received this letter, I was going to Paris in a " day or two, and either forgot his requeſt of the poems, " or perhaps not having time to have them copied, " deferred complying till my return, which was to be in " ſix weeks. I proteſt I do not remember which was the " caſe; and yet, though in a cauſe of ſo little importance, " I will not utter a ſyllable of which I am not poſitively " certain, nor will not charge my memory with a tittle be- " yond what it retains. Soon after my return from France, " I received another letter from Chatterton, the ſtyle of " which was ſingularly impertinent. He demanded his " poems

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fortunate enough to receive a tincture of infidelity, we are not informed. Early in the

" poems roughly; and added, that I ſhould not have dared
" to uſe him ſo ill, if he had not acquainted me with the
" narrowneſs of his circumſtances My heart did not accuſe
" me of inſolence to him. I wrote an anſwer to him, ex-
" poſtulating with him on his injuſtice, and renewing good
" advice; but upon ſecond thoughts, reflecting that ſo
" wrong-headed a young man, of whom I knew nothing,
" and whom I had never ſeen, might be abſurd enough to
" print my letter, I flung it into the fire; and wrapping up
" both his poems and letters, without taking a copy of
" either, for which I am now ſorry, I returned all to him,
" and thought no more about him or them, till about a year
" and a half after, when dining at the Royal Academy,
" Dr. Goldſmith drew the attention of the company with
" an account of a marvellous treaſure of ancient poems
" lately diſcovered at Briſtol, and expreſſed enthuſiaſtic be-
" lief in them, for which he was laughed at by Dr. John-
" ſon, who was preſent. I ſoon found this was the trou-
" vaille of my friend Chatterton; and I told Dr. Goldſmith
" that this novelty was none to me, who might, if I had
" pleaſed, have had the honour of uſhering the great diſ-
" covery to the learned world. You may imagine, Sir,
" we did not at all agree in the meaſure of our faith; but
" though his credulity diverted me, my mirth was ſoon
" daſhed; for on aſking about Chatterton, he told me he
" had been in London, and had deſtroyed himſelf. I
" heartily wiſhed then that I had been the dupe of all the
" poor young man had written to me; for who would not
" have

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the year 1769, it appears from a poem on Happineſs, addreſſed to Mr. Catcott, that he

"have his underſtanding impoſed upon to ſave a fellow "being from the utmoſt wretchedneſs, deſpair, and ſuicide! "and a poor young man, not eighteen, and of ſuch miracu- "lous talents; for, dear Sir, if I wanted credulity on "one hand, it is ample on the other. Yet heap all the "improbabilities you pleaſe on the head of Chatterton, the "impoſſibility on Rowley's ſide will remain. An amazing "genius for poetry, which one of them poſſeſſed, might "flaſh out in the darkeſt age; but could Rowley anticipate "the phraſeology of the eighteenth century? His poetic "fire might burſt through the obſtacles of the times; like "Homer, or other original bards, he might have formed "a poetical ſtyle; but would it have been preciſely that "of an age ſubſequent to him by ſome hundred years? "Nobody can admire the poetry of the poems in queſtion "more than I do, but except being better than moſt mo- "dern verſes, in what do they differ in the conſtruction? "The words are old, the conſtruction evidently of yeſter- "day; and, by ſubſtituting modern words, aye, ſingle "words, to the old, or to thoſe invented by Chatterton, "in what do they differ? Try that method with any com- "poſition, even in proſe, of the reign of Henry VI. and "ſee if the conſequence will be the ſame. But I am get- "ting into the controverſy, inſtead of concluding my nar- "rative, which indeed is ended."

Whatever imputation might have lain on Mr. Walpole with regard to the treatment of Chatterton, before theſe particulars were known, and this narrative appeared, ſurely there

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he had drank deeply of the poiſoned ſpring: And in the concluſion of a letter to

there can be no impartial reader of it who will not acquit him of any ill treatment of a perſon who appeared to him in ſo queſtionable a ſhape; and allow that in Mr. Walpole's ſituation, he could ſcarcely have acted otherwiſe than he did. For what was the caſe? A youth of ſixteen years of age, clerk to an attorney at Briſtol, totally unknown to Mr. Walpole, ſends him a letter, acquainting him that the writer, though bred to the law, had a taſte for politer ſtudies, particularly poetry, and wiſhed to be drawn out of his preſent ſituation, and placed in one more at his eaſe, where he might purſue the ſtudies more congenial to his taſte and genius; but of this taſte and genius he produces no other proof than tranſcripts of ſome old poems, ſaid to have been found at Briſtol, and to be *the property of another perſon.* Theſe poems being exhibited by Mr. Walpole to Mr. Gray and Mr. Maſon, theſe excellent and impartial judges agreed in opinion that they muſt be modern productions, diſguiſed in antiquated phraſes; and, with regard to a long liſt of Briſtol artiſts, carvellers and painters, announced alſo as part of this treaſure, Mr. Walpole was as confident that none ſuch ever had any exiſtence, and therefore he could not help concluding that the whole was a fiction, contrived by ſome one or more literary wags, who wiſhed to impoſe on his credulity, and to laugh at him if they ſucceeded, and that Chatterton was only the inſtrument employed to introduce and recommend theſe old writings. His youth and ſituation could not lead Mr. Walpole to ſuppoſe he was himſelf the author and contriver, more eſpecially as he had aſſerted

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to the ſame gentleman, after he left Briſtol, he expreſſes himſelf: " Heaven ſend you

aſſerted them to be the property of a perſon at Briſtol then alive. He had indeed repreſented himſelf as a lover of the muſes, but had given no ſpecimens of his *own* compoſitions: The kindeſt thing therefore Mr. Walpole could do for a young man in this ſituation, was, after a gentle hint of his ſuſpicions of the authenticity of the poems, to recommend to his correſpondent to purſue the line of buſineſs in which he was placed, as moſt likely to ſecure a decent maintenance for himſelf, and enable him to aſſiſt his mother. However diſappointed Chatterton might have been at the time, and angry with Mr. Walpole for this rebuff, it ſhould ſeem as if he had not harboured any long or ſtrong reſentment againſt that gentleman; for in a copy of verſes addreſſed to Miſs M. R. and ſent by him to the Town and Country Magazine, and printed in the Number for January 1770, is the following ſtanza:

" Yet when that bloom and dancing fire,
" In ſilver'd reverence ſhall expire,
" Aged, wrinkled, and defac'd,
" To keep one lover's flame alive
" Requires the genius of a *Clive*,
" With WALPOLE's mental taſte.

See Chatterton's Miſcellanies, p. 88.

It ſhould ſeem alſo, that Chatterton had in part adopted Mr. Walpole's advice, by continuing with his maſter a full twelvemonth after his application to that gentlemen. Then he

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you the comforts of Chriſtianity; I requeſt them not, for I am no Chriſtian." Infidelity,

he got diſmiſſed from his maſter and went to London, in full confidence that his literary talents would find ample employment and encouragement from the London bookſellers; but being diſappointed in his expectation, the fatal concluſion which has juſt been mentioned took place. Had this been the caſe immediately on his receipt of Mr. Walpole's laſt letter, ſome ſhadow of foundation might have appeared for the harſh cenſures paſſed on Mr. Walpole's treatment of this ill-fated youth; though even then, no real one, all circumſtances conſidered.

From the ſpirited reply of Mr. Walpole to one of theſe cenſurers, (the Editor of Chatterton's Miſcellanies,) and printed in the ſame pamphlet as the letter to W. B. the following extract is given, as equally applicable to all objectors.

"Was it the part of a juſt man to couple Chatterton's "firſt unſucceſsful application with his fatal exit, and load "me with both? Does your enthuſiaſtic admiration of "his abilities, or your regrets for the honour of England's "poetry, warrant ſuch a concatenation of ideas? Was "poor Chatterton ſo modeſt, or ſo deſponding, as to aban"don his enterprizes on their being damped by me? Did "he not continue to purſue them? Is this country ſo deſti"tute of patrons of genius, or do I move in ſo eminent and "diſtinguiſhed a ſphere, that a repulſe from me is a dagger "to talents? Did not Chatterton come to London after "that miſcarriage? Did he relinquiſh his counterfeiting "propenſity on its being loſt on me? Was he an inoffen-

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Infidelity, or ſcepticiſm at leaſt, may be termed the diſeaſe of young, lively, and half-informed minds. There is ſomething like

" ſive ingenuous youth, ſmit with the love of the muſes,
" and ſoaring above a ſordid and ſervile profeſſion, whoſe
" early bloſſoms being blighted by my inſolence, withered
" in mortified obſcurity, and on ſeeing his hopes of fame
" blaſted, ſunk beneath the frowns of ignorant and inſolent
" wealth? or did he, after launching into all the exceſſes
" you deſcribe, and vainly hoping to gratify his ambition
" by adulation to, or ſatires on all ranks and parties of
" men, fall a victim to his own ungovernable ſpirit, and to
" the deplorable ſtraits to which he had reduced himſelf?
" The interval was ſhort, I own; but as every moment of
" ſo extraordinary a life was crouded with efforts of his en-
" terpriſing genius, allow me to ſay with truth, that there
" was a large chaſm between his application to me and his
" miſerable concluſion. You know there was; and though
" my falling into his ſnare might have varied the æra of
" his exploits, it is more likely that that ſucceſs would
" rather have encouraged than checked his enterpriſes.
" When he purſued his turn for fabricating ancient writings,
" in ſpite of the mortification he received from me, it is
" not probable that he would have been corrected by ſuc-
" ceſs; ſuch is not the nature of ſucceſs, when it is the
" reward of artifice. I ſhould be more juſtly reproachable
" for having contributed to cheriſh an impoſtor, than I am
" for having accelerated his fate. I cannot repeat the
" words without emotions of indignation on my own ac-
" count, and of compaſſion on his." O.

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like diſcovery in the rejection of truths to which they have been from infancy in trammels. A little learning, too, miſleads the underſtanding, in an opinion of its own powers. When we have acquired the outlines of ſcience, we are apt to ſuppoſe that every thing is within our comprehenſion. Much ſtudy and much information are required to diſcover the difficulties in which the ſyſtems of infidels are involved. There are profound, as well as popular arguments, in favour of revealed religion; but when the flippancy of Voltaire or Hume has taught young perſons to ſuppoſe that they have defeated the former, their underſtandings ſeldom recover ſufficient vigour to purſue the latter with the ability and perſeverance of a Newton or a Bryant.

The evil effect of theſe principles upon the morals of youth, is often found to ſurvive the ſpeculative impreſſions which they

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have made on the intellect. Wretched is that perſon, who, in the ardour and impetuoſity of youth, finds himſelf releaſed from all the ſalutary reſtraints of duty and religion; wretched is he, who, deprived of all the comforting hopes of another ſtate, is reduced to ſeek for happineſs in the vicious gratifications of this life; who, under ſuch deluſions, acquires habits of profligacy or diſcontent! The progreſs, however, from ſpeculative to practical irreligion, is not ſo rapid as is commonly ſuppoſed. The greateſt advantage of a ſtrict and orderly education is the reſiſtance which virtuous habits, early acquired, oppoſe to the allurements of vice. Thoſe who have ſullied the youth of Chatterton with the imputation of extraordinary vices or irregularities, and have aſſerted, that "his profligacy was, at leaſt, as conſpicuous as his abilities *," have, I conceive, rather grounded theſe aſſertions on

* Preface to Chatterton's Miſcellanies, p. 18.

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on the apparently profane and immoral tendency of ſome of his productions, than on perſonal knowledge or a correct review of his conduct. During his reſidence at Briſtol, we have the moſt reſpectable evidence in favour of the regularity of his conduct, namely, that of his maſter, Mr. Lambert. Of few young men in his ſituation it can be ſaid, that during a courſe of nearly three years, he ſeldom encroached upon the ſtrict limits which were aſſigned him, with reſpect to his hours of liberty; that his maſter could never accuſe him of improper behaviour, and that he had the utmoſt reaſon to be ſatisfied he never ſpent his hours of leiſure in any but reſpectable company.

Mrs. Newton, with that unaffected ſimplicity which ſo eminently characteriſes her letter, moſt powerfully controverts the obloquy which had been thrown upon her brother's memory. She ſays, that while he was at Mr. Lambert's, he viſited

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his mother regularly moſt evenings before nine o'clock, and they were ſeldom two evenings together without ſeeing him. He was for a conſiderable time remarkably indifferent to females. He declared to his ſiſter, that he had always ſeen the whole ſex with perfect indifference, except thoſe whom nature had rendered dear. He remarked, at the ſame time, the tendency of ſevere ſtudy to ſour the temper, and indicated his inclination to form an acquaintance with a young female in the neighbourhood, apprehending that it might ſoften that auſterity of temper which had reſulted from ſolitary ſtudy. The juvenile Petrarch wanted a Laura, to poliſh his manners and exerciſe his fancy. He addreſſed a poem to Miſs Rumſey; and they commenced, Mrs. Newton adds, a correſponding acquaintance. "He would alſo frequently," ſhe ſays, "walk the College Green with the young girls that ſtatedly paraded there to ſhew their finery;"

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finery * ;" but ſhe is perſuaded that the reports which charge him with libertiniſm are ill-founded †. She could not perhaps have added a better proof of it, than his inclination to aſſociate with modeſt women. The teſtimony of Mr. Thiſtlethwaite is not leſs explicit or leſs honourable to Chatterton. " The opportunities," ſays he, " which a long acquaintance with him

* In a letter from London to his ſiſter, he particularizes ten Briſtol females of his acquaintance, and adds, " I pro- " miſed to write to ſome hundreds, I believe; but what " with writing for publications, and going to places of " public diverſion, which is as abſolutely neceſſary to me " as my food, I find but little time to write to you." O.

† Mrs. Newton's letter. I cannot help remarking a pleaſant miſtake of the Dean of Exeter: The orthography of Mrs. N. in the letter printed in Love and Madneſs, is not the moſt correct. Her words are, " I really believe he was no debauchee (though ſome have reported it); the dear unhappy boy had faults enough, I ſaw with concern; he was proud and exceedingly imperious, but that of *venality* he could not be juſtly accuſed with." It is eaſy to ſee that Mrs. N. by *venality* means libertiniſm; but the Dean taking the word in the uſual ſenſe, makes uſe of it to diſprove, what is ſeldom ſuſpected of a poet, and leaſt of all of Chatterton, that he was avaricious.

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afforded me, juſtify me in ſaying, that whilſt he lived at Briſtol, he was not the debauched character he has been repreſented. Temperate in his living, moderate in his pleaſures, and regular in his exerciſes, he was undeſerving of the aſperſion. I admit that amongſt his papers may be found many paſſages, not only immoral, but bordering upon a libertiniſm groſs and unpardonable. It is not my intention to attempt a vindication of thoſe paſſages, which, for the regard I bear his memory, I wiſh he had never written, but which I nevertheleſs believe to have originated rather from a warmth of imagination, aided by a vain affectation of ſingularity, than from any natural depravity, or from a heart vitiated by evil example *."

But

* Milles's Rowley, p. 461. Whether the following paſſage from Chatterton's Kew Gardens (a poem not publiſhed in any of the collections of his works) be received as a confirmation of his friend's teſtimony in his favour, or the contrary,

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But though it may not always be the effect of infidel principles, to plunge the perſon who becomes unfortunately infected with them into an immediate courſe of flagrant and ſhameleſs depravity, they ſeldom

trary, it is, however, worth preſerving. An officious friend is introduced accoſting him in the following lines:

" Is there a ſtreet within this ſpacious place,
" That boaſts the happineſs of one fair face,
" Whoſe converſation does not turn on you?
" Blaming your wild amours, and morals too.
" Oaths, ſacred and tremendous oaths you ſwear,
" Oaths which might ſhock a L——'s ſoul to hear;
" Whilſt the too tender and believing maid,
" Remember pretty ——— is betray'd.
" Then your religion!—oh, beware! beware!
" Although a Deiſt is no monſter here,
" Think not the merit of a jingling ſong
" Can countenance the author's acting wrong.
" Reform your manners, and with ſolemn air,
" Hear Catcott bray, and Robins ſqueak in prayer.
" Damn'd narrow notions, notions which diſgrace
" The boaſted freedom of the human race;
" Briſtol may keep her prudent maxims ſtill,
" I ſcorn her prudence, and I ever will.
" Since all my vices magnified are here,
" She cannot paint me worſe than I appear.
" When raving in the lunacy of ink,
" I catch the pen, and publiſh what I think." O.

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dom fail to unhinge the mind, and render it the ſport of ſome paſſion, unfriendly to our happineſs and proſperity. One of their firſt effects in Chatterton was to render the idea of ſuicide familiar, and to diſpoſe him to think lightly of the moſt ſacred depoſit with which man is entruſted by his Creator. It has been ſuppoſed that his violent death in London, was the ſudden or almoſt inſtant effect of extreme poverty and diſappointment. It appears, however, that long before he left Briſtol, he had repeatedly intimated to the ſervants of Mr. Lambert, his intention of putting an end to his exiſtence. Mr. Lambert's mother was particularly terrified, but ſhe was unable to perſuade her ſon of the reality of his threats, till he found by accident upon his deſk a paper, entitled, the "Laſt Will and Teſtament of Thomas Chatterton *," in which he ſeriouſly indicated

* See the Will in the Appendix to Chatterton's Miſc.

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cated his design of committing suicide on the following day, namely, Easter Sunday, April 15th, 1770. The paper was probably rather the result of temporary uneasiness *, than of that fixed aversion to his situation which he constantly manifested; but with principles and passions such as Chatterton displayed, Mr. Lambert considered it as no longer prudent, after so decisive a proof, to continue him in the house; he accordingly dismissed him immediately from his service, in which he had continued two years, nine months, and thirteen days.

If there was any sincerity in the intentions of committing suicide, which he expressed in the paper above alluded to, he was diverted from it for the present by the golden prospects with which he flattered himself from a new plan of life, on which he entered

* I have been informed from good authority, that it was occasioned by the refusal of a gentleman, whom he had occasionally complimented in his poems, to accommodate him with a supply of money.

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entered with his uſual enthuſiaſm. A few months before he left Briſtol, he had written letters to ſeveral bookſellers in London *, "who," Mr. Thiſtlethwaite ſays, "finding him of advantage to them in their publications, were by no means ſparing of their praiſes and compliments; adding the moſt liberal promiſes of aſſiſtance and employment, ſhould he chooſe to make London the place of his reſidence †." To the interrogatories of this gentleman concerning the plan of life which he intended to purſue on his arrival at London, his anſwer was remarkable, and correſponds with what has been juſt related. "My firſt attempt," ſaid he, "ſhall be in the literary way: The promiſes I have received are ſufficient to diſpel doubt; but ſhould I, contrary to my expectation, find myſelf deceived, I will in that caſe turn Methodiſt preacher: Credulity is as potent a deity as ever, and a new

* Mrs. Newton's Letter.
† Milles's Rowley, p. 460.

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new ſect may eaſily be deviſed. But if that too ſhould fail me, my laſt and final reſource is a piſtol."

Before he quitted Briſtol, he had entered deeply into politics, and had embraced what was termed the patriotic party. In March 1770, he wrote a ſatirical poem, called "Kew Gardens," conſiſting of above 1300 lines. This he tranſmitted, in different packets, to Mr. George William Edmunds, No. 73, Shoe-lane, Printer of a patriotic newſpaper. At the bottom of the firſt packet, which contained about 300 lines, written in Chatterton's own hand, is this poſtſcript. "Mr. Edmunds will ſend the author, Thomas Chatterton, twenty of the Journals, in which the above poem (which I ſhall continue) ſhall appear, by the machine, if he thinks proper to put it in; the money ſhall be paid to his orders." The poem is a ſatire on the Princeſs Dowager of Wales,

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Lord Bute, and their Friends in London and Briſtol, but particularly on thoſe in Briſtol, who had diſtinguiſhed themſelves in favour of the Miniſtry. His ſignature on this occaſion was DECIMUS; but whether the poem was ever printed or not, I have not been able to aſcertain. I have been alſo informed of another political ſatire of near 600 lines, the manuſcript of which, in Chatterton's hand-writing, is in the poſſeſſion of a friend of Mr. Catcott. It is called "The Whore of Babylon." The ſatire of this poem is alſo directed againſt the Miniſtry, and, like the former, it includes ſeveral of the Briſtol people, not excepting Mr. George Catcott, and his brother the clergyman. But his party efforts were not confined altogether to poetry; he wrote an invective in proſe againſt Biſhop Newton, alſo ſigned Decimus, which, I believe, appeared in ſome of the periodical publications of the times.

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The manuſcript of this letter is in Mr. Catcott's poſſeſſion; but the ſtyle appears much inferior to that of his proſe publications poſterior to his arrival in London. To write well in proſe is perhaps more the effect of art, of ſtudy, and of habit, than of natural genius. The rules of metrical compoſition are fewer, more ſimple, and require a leſs conſtant exerciſe of the judgment. In the infancy of ſocieties, as well as of individuals, therefore, the art of poetry is antecedent to thoſe of rhetoric and criticiſm, and arrives at perfection long before the language of proſe attains that degree of ſtrength, conciſeneſs, and harmony, which is requiſite to ſatisfy a delicate ear. Chatterton wrote alſo an indecent ſatirical poem, called "The Exhibition," occaſioned by the improper behaviour of a perſon in Briſtol. The ſatire of this poem is chiefly local, and the characters of moſt of the ſurgeons in Briſtol

are delineated in it. Some deſcriptive paſſages in this poem have great merit. Thus, ſpeaking of a favourite organiſt, probably Mr. Allen, he ſays:

"He keeps the paſſions with the ſound in play,
"And the ſoul trembles with the trembling key *."

There are a number of other unpubliſhed works of his diſperſed in the hands of different perſons. The activity of his mind is indeed almoſt unparalleled. But our ſurpriſe muſt decreaſe, when we conſider that he ſlept but little; and that his whole attention was directed to literary purſuits; for he declares himſelf ſo ignorant of his profeſſion, that he was unable to draw out a clearance from his apprenticeſhip, which Mr. Lambert demanded †. He was alſo unfettered by the ſtudy of the dead languages, which uſually abſorb much of

* Love and Madneſs, p. 167.

† See the third letter of Chatterton, publiſhed in Love and Madneſs, p. 198.

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of the time and attention of young perſons; and though they may be uſeful to the attainment of correctneſs, perhaps they do not much contribute to fluency in writing. Mr. Catcott declared, that when he firſt knew Chatterton, he was ignorant even of Grammar *.

There are three great æras in the life of Chatterton, his admiſſion into Colſton's ſchool, his being put apprentice to Mr. Lambert, and his expedition to London. In the latter end of April, 1770, he bade his native city (from which he had never previouſly been abſent further than he could walk in half a Sunday) *a final adieu* †. In a letter to his mother, dated April 26th, he deſcribes in a lively ſtyle the little adventures of his journey, and his reception from his patrons, the bookſellers and printers with whom he had

* From the information of Mr. Seward.

† Love and Madneſs, p. 191.

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correſponded; theſe were Mr. Edmunds, whom I lately had occaſion to mention as a noted patriotic printer at that period; Mr. Fell, publiſher of the Freeholder's Magazine; Mr. Hamilton, proprietor of the Town and Country; and Mr. Dodſley, of Pall-Mall. From all of them he profeſſes to have received great encouragement, adding, that all approved of his deſign, and that he ſhould probably be ſoon ſettled. In the ſame letter, he deſires his mother to call upon Mr. Lambert. "Shew him this," ſays he, with uncommon dignity and ſpirit, "or tell him, if I deſerve a recommendation, he would oblige me to give me one—if I do not, it would be beneath him to take notice of me *."

His firſt habitation after his arrival in London was at Mr. Walmſley's, a plaiſterer in Shoreditch, to whom he was introduced by a relation of his, a Mrs. Ballance, who

* Love and Madneſs, p. 192.

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who reſided in the ſame houſe. Of his firſt eſtabliſhment, his report is favourable. "I am ſettled," ſays he, in a letter to his mother, dated May 6th, "and in ſuch a ſettlement as I could deſire. I get four guineas a month by one magazine; ſhall engage to write a hiſtory of England, and other pieces, which will more than double that ſum. Occaſional eſſays for the daily papers would more than ſupport me. What a glorious proſpect * !" In conſequence of his engagements with the different magazines, we find him, about the ſame time, ſoliciting communications from his poetical and literary friends at Briſtol, and deſiring them to read the Freeholder's Magazine. In a letter dated the 14th of the ſame month, he writes in the ſame high flow of ſpirits: He ſpeaks of the great encouragement which genius meets with in London; adding, with exultation,

* Love and Madneſs, p. 197.

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" If Rowley had been a Londoner inſtead of a Briſtowyan, I might have lived by copying his works. *" He exhorts his ſiſter to " improve in copying muſic, drawing, and every thing which requires genius;" obſerving that although, " in Briſtol's mercantile ſtyle, thoſe things may be uſeleſs, if not a detriment to her; *here* they are very profitable †." His engagements at that period indeed appear to have been numerous; for beſides his employment in the magazines, he ſpeaks of a connection which he had formed with a doctor in muſic, to write ſongs for Ranelagh, Vauxhall, &c.; and in a letter of the 30th to his ſiſter, he mentions another with a Scottiſh bookſeller, to compile a voluminous hiſtory of London, to appear in numbers, for which he was to have

* Yet it does not appear that any of Rowley's pieces were exhibited after C. left Briſtol. O.

† Love and Madneſs, p. 201.

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have his board at the bookſeller's houſe, and a handſome premium *.

Party writing, however, ſeems to have been one of his favourite employments. It was agreeable to the ſatirical turn of his diſpoſition, and it gratified his vanity, by the proſpect of elevating him into immediate notice. When his relation, Mrs. Ballance, recommended it to him to endeavour to get into ſome office, he ſtormed like a madman, and alarmed the good old lady in no inconſiderable degree, by telling her, "he hoped, with the bleſſing of God, very ſoon to be ſent priſoner to the Tower, which would make his fortune." In his ſecond letter to his mother from London, he ſays, "Mr. Wilkes knew me by my writings, ſince I firſt

* Love and Madneſs, p. 202. The Editor of Chatterton's Miſcellanies confounds this with Northook's Hiſtory of London; but that gentleman, in a letter printed in the St. James's Chronicle, denies having ever had the leaſt knowledge of C. Indeed the ſcheme above alluded to appears not to have been proceeded in.

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correſponded with the bookſellers here. I ſhall viſit him next week, and by his intereſt will inſure Mrs. Ballance the Trinity Houſe. He affirmed that what Mr. Fell had of mine could not be the writings of a youth, and expreſſed a deſire to know the author. By means of another bookſeller, I ſhall be introduced to Townſhend and Sawbridge. I am quite familiar at the Chapter Coffee-houſe, and know all the geniuſſes there. A character is now unneceſſary; an author carries his character in his pen *." He informs his ſiſter that, if money flowed as faſt upon him as honours, he would give her a portion of five thouſand pounds. This extraordinary elevation of ſpirits aroſe from an introduction to the celebrated patriotic Lord Mayor, W. Beckford. Chatterton had, it ſeems, addreſſed an eſſay to him, which was ſo well received, that it encouraged him to wait

* Love and Madneſs, p. 194.

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upon his Lordſhip, in order to obtain his approbation to addreſs a ſecond letter to him, on the ſubject of the city remonſtrance, and its reception. "His Lordſhip (adds he) received me as politely as a citizen could, and warmly invited me to call on him again. The reſt is a ſecret." His inclination doubtleſs led him to eſpouſe the party of oppoſition; but he complains, that "no money is to be got on that ſide the queſtion; intereſt is on the other ſide. But he is a poor author who cannot write on both ſides. I believe I may be introduced (and if I am not, I'll introduce myſelf) to a ruling power in the Court party*." When Beckford died, he is ſaid to have been almoſt frantic †, and to have exclaimed, that he was ruined. The elegy, however, in which he has celebrated him ‡,

* Love and Madneſs, p. 203.
† Ibid. p. 214.
‡ Chat. Miſcel. p. 76.

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contains more of frigid praiſe, than of ardent feeling; nor is there in it a ſingle line which appears to flow from the heart. Indeed, that he was ſerious in his intention of writing on both ſides, is evident from a liſt of pieces written by Chatterton, but never publiſhed, which Mr. Walpole has preſerved. No. V. of theſe pieces is a letter to Lord North, dated May 26th, 1770, ſigned *Moderator*, and beginning, "My Lord, It gives me a painful pleaſure, &c." It contains, as Mr. Walpole informs us, an encomium on Adminiſtration for rejecting the City Remonſtrance. On the other hand, No. VI. is a letter to the Lord Mayor, Beckford, (probably that which he deſired his permiſſion to addreſs to him). It is alſo dated May 26, ſigned *Probus*, and contains a virulent invective againſt Government for rejecting the Remonſtrance, beginning, "When the endeavours of a ſpirited people to free themſelves

ſelves from inſupportable ſlavery, &c." On the back of this eſſay, which is directed to Mr. Cary, a particular friend of Chatterton in Briſtol, is this indorſement: "Accepted by Bingley—ſet for, and thrown out of the North Briton, 21ſt June, on account of the Lord Mayor's death.

Loſt by his death on this Eſſay,		£. 1 11	6
Gained in Elegies,	£. 2 2 0		
—— In Eſſays,	3 3 0		
		5 5	0
Am glad he is dead by —		£. 3 13	6*

"Eſſays," again ſays he to his ſiſter, "on the patriotic ſide, fetch no more than what the copy is ſold for. As the patriots themſelves are ſearching for a place, they have no gratuities to ſpare. On the other hand, unpopular eſſays will not even be accepted, and you muſt pay to have them printed;

* Two letters printed at Strawberry-hill.

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printed; but then you ſeldom loſe by it. Courtiers are ſo ſenſible of their deficiency in merit, that they generally reward all who know how to daub them with an appearance of it *." Either Chatterton, on this occaſion, ſpoke from hear-ſay, or there is reaſon to believe that the miniſterial arrangements are greatly altered in this reſpect, and that moſt of the late adminiſtrations have found a more effectual, if a more expenſive ſupport, from a venal majority in the Houſe, than from a venal phalanx of mendicant authors in the daily papers.

On this ſandy foundation of party writing Chatterton erected a viſionary fabric of future greatneſs; and, in the waking dreams of a poetical imagination, he was already a man of conſiderable public importance. It was a common aſſertion with him, "that he would ſettle the nation before he had

* Love and Madneſs, p. 204.

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had done*." In a letter to his ſiſter of the 20th July, he tells her, "My company is courted every where; and, could I humble myſelf to go into a compter, could have had twenty places before now; but I muſt be among the great; ſtate matters ſuit me better than commercial†." In a former letter he intimates, that he "might have had a recommendation to Sir George Colebrooke, an Eaſt-India Director, as qualified for an office no ways deſpicable, but," he adds, "I ſhall not take a ſtep to the ſea, whilſt I can continue on land‡." His taſte for diſſipation ſeems to have kept pace with the increaſe of his vanity. To frequent places of public amuſement, he accounts as neceſſary to him as food. "I employ my money," ſays he, "now in fitting myſelf faſhionably, and getting into

* Love and Madneſs, p. 214.
† Ibid. p. 210.
‡ Ibid. p. 203.
|| Ibid. p. 200.

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into good company; this laſt article always brings me in intereſt *."

While engaged in the examination of theſe curious letters, it is impoſſible not to be attracted by a remarkable paſſage. Chatterton informs his mother in the letter of May 14th, "A gentleman, who knows me at the Chapter, as an author, would have introduced me as a companion to the young Duke of Northumberland, in his intended general tour; but, alas! I ſpeak no tongue but my own †." It is not very credible, that any of the conſtant frequenters of the Chapter Coffee-houſe ſhould be poſſeſſed of influence ſufficient to recommend a perſon to the Duke of Northumberland, to ſo important an office as that of the care of his ſon; much leſs credible is it, that ſuch a perſon would recommend a young literary adventurer, whoſe

* Love and Madneſs, p. 202.

† Ibid. p. 198.

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whoſe character was only known by an accidental meeting at a coffee-houſe; and leaſt credible of all it is, that ſuch a perſon was likely to be accepted on ſo ſlender a ground of recommendation. It is no unfrequent ſport with little minds to play with the ſanguine tempers and expectations of young and unexperienced minds: Poor Chatterton had tolerable experience of theſe prodigal promiſers, from the patriotic Beckford to his pretended patron at the Chapter Coffee-houſe.

The ſplendid viſions of promotion and conſequence however ſoon vaniſhed, and our adventurer found no patrons but the bookſellers; and even here he ſeems not to have eſcaped the poignant ſting of diſappointment. Soon after his arrival in London, he writes to his mother, "The poverty of authors is a common obſervation, but not always a true one. No author can be poor who underſtands the arts

arts of bookſellers; without this neceſſary knowledge the greateſt genius may ſtarve, and with it the greateſt dunce may live in ſplendour. This knowledge I have pretty well dipped into *." This knowledge, however, inſtead of conducting to opulence and independence, proved a deluſive guide; and though he boaſts of having pieces in the month of June 1770 in the Goſpel Magazine, the Town and Country, the Court and City, the London, the Political Regiſter, &c. and that almoſt the whole Town and Country for the following month was his †, yet it appears, ſo ſcanty is the remuneration for thoſe periodical labours, that even theſe uncommon exertions of induſtry and genius were inſufficient to ward off the approach of poverty; and he ſeems to have ſunk almoſt at once from the higheſt elevation of hope and illuſion, to

* Love and Madneſs, p. 195.

† Ibid. p. 210.

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to the depths of deſpair. Early in July he removed his lodgings from Shoreditch to Mrs. Angel's, a ſack-maker in Brook-ſtreet, Holborn. Mr. Walmſley's family affirmed that he aſſigned no reaſon for quitting their houſe. The author of Love and Madneſs attributes the change to the neceſſity he was under, from the nature of his employments, of frequenting public places *. Is it not probable that he might remove, leſt his friends in Shoreditch, who had heard his frequent boaſts, and obſerved his dream of greatneſs, ſhould be the ſpectators of his approaching indigence? Pride was the ruling paſſion of Chatterton, and a too acute ſenſe of ſhame is ever found to accompany literary pride. But however he might be deſirous of preſerving appearances to the world, he was ſufficiently lowered in his own expectations; and great indeed muſt have been his

* Love and Madneſs, p. 189.

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his humiliation, when we find his towering ambition reduced to the miſerable hope of ſecuring the very ineligible appointment of a ſurgeon's mate to Africa. To his friend Mr. Barrett he applied in his diſtreſs for a recommendation to this unpromiſing ſtation. Even in this dreary proſpect he was not, however, without the conſolations of his muſe; his fancy delighted itſelf with the expectation of contemplating the wonders of a country, where "Nature flouriſhes in her moſt perfect vigour; where the *purple* aloe, and the ſcarlet jeſſamine, diffuſe their rich perfumes; where the reeking tygers baſk in the ſedges, or wanton with their ſhadows in the ſtream."*

His reſolution was announced in a poem to Miſs Buſh,† in the ſtyle of Cowley, that is, with too much affectation of wit for real feeling.

* See the African Eclogues, Chat. Miſ. p. 56—61.

† Chat. Miſc. p. 85.

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feeling. Probably, indeed, when he compoſed the African Eclogues, which was juſt before, he might not be without a diſtant contemplation of a ſimilar deſign; and perhaps we are to attribute a part of the exulting expreſſions, which occur in the letters to his mother and ſiſter, to the kind and laudable intention of making them happy with reſpect to his proſpects in life; ſince we find him, almoſt at the very criſis of his diſtreſs, ſending a number of little unneceſſary preſents to them and his grandmother, while perhaps he was himſelf almoſt in want of the neceſſaries of life.

On the ſcore of incapacity probably, Mr. Barrett refuſed him the neceſſary recommendation, and his laſt hope was blaſted*. Of Mrs. Angel, with whom he

* This circumſtance reflects no diſgrace, but rather honour upon Mr. B. as he could not poſſibly foreſee the melancholy conſequence, and he could not in conſcience be the inſtrument

laſt reſided, no enquiries have afforded any ſatisfactory intelligence; but there can be little doubt that his death was preceded by extreme indigence. Mr. Croſs, an apothecary in Brook-ſtreet, informed Mr. Warton, that while Chatterton lived in the neighbourhood, he frequently called at the ſhop, and was repeatedly preſſed by Mr. Croſs to dine or ſup with him in vain. One evening, however, human frailty ſo far prevailed over his dignity, as to tempt him to partake of the regale of a barrel of oyſters, when he was obſerved to eat moſt voraciouſly †. Mrs. Wolfe, a barber's wife, within a few doors of the houſe where Mrs. Angel lived, has alſo afforded ample teſtimony, both to his poverty and his pride. She ſays, "that Mrs. Angel told her, after his death, that on the 24th of Auguſt, as ſhe knew he had

inſtrument of committing the lives of a conſiderable number of perſons to one totally inadequate to the charge.

† Warton's Inquiry, p. 107.

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had not eaten any thing for two or three days, ſhe begged he would take ſome dinner with her; but he was offended at her expreſſions, which ſeemed to hint he was in want, and aſſured her he was not hungry *." In theſe deſperate circumſtances, his mind reverted to what (we learn from Mr. Thiſtlethwaite, and other quarters) he had accuſtomed himſelf to regard as a laſt reſource.—" Over his death, for the ſake of the world," ſays the author of Love and Madneſs, " I would willingly draw a veil. But this muſt not be. They who are in a condition to patroniſe merit, and they who feel a conſciouſneſs of merit which is not patroniſed, may form their own reſolutions from the cataſtrophe of his tale;—thoſe, to loſe no opportunity of befriending genius; theſe, to ſeize every opportunity of befriending themſelves, and, upon no account, to

* Love and Madneſs, p. 219.

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harbour the moſt diſtant idea of quitting the world, however it may be unworthy of them, leſt deſpondency ſhould at laſt deceive them into ſo unpardonable a ſtep. Chatterton, as appears by the Coroner's Inqueſt, ſwallowed arſenick in water, on the 24th of Auguſt 1770, and died in conſequence thereof the next day. He was buried in a ſhell, in the burying ground of Shoe-lane work-houſe *." Whatever unfiniſhed pieces he might have, he cautiouſly deſtroyed them before his death; and his room, when broken open, was found covered with little ſcraps of paper †. What muſt increaſe our regret for this haſty and unhappy ſtep, is the information that the late Dr. Fry, head of St. John's College in Oxford, went to Briſtol in the latter end of Auguſt 1770, in order to ſearch into the hiſtory of Rowley and Chatterton, and to patroniſe the latter,

* Love and Madneſs, p. 221.

† Ibid. p. 222.

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latter, if he appeared to deſerve aſſiſtance—when, alas! all the intelligence he could procure was, that Chatterton had, within a few days, deſtroyed himſelf *.

I have been induced, from the circumſtances of the narrative, repeatedly to conſider the character of Chatterton in the different ſtages of life in which I had occaſion to contemplate him. Indeed, the character of any man is better underſtood from a fair and accurate ſtatement of his life and conduct, than from the comments of any critic or biographer whatever. A few general obſervations, which could not with ſo much propriety be introduced into the body of the narrative, I ſhall, however, venture to ſubjoin; though I flatter myſelf the reader is not at this time unacquainted with the outline of his moral portrait.

The perſon of Chatterton, like his genius, was premature; he had a man-

* Love and Madneſs, p. 226.

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lineſs and dignity beyond his years, and there was a ſomething about him uncommonly prepoſſeſſing. His moſt remarkable feature was his eyes, which, though gray, were uncommonly piercing; when he was warmed in argument, or otherwiſe, they ſparked with fire, and one eye, it is ſaid, was ſtill more remarkable than the other *. His genius will be moſt completely eſtimated from his writings. He had an uncommon ardour in the purſuit of knowledge, and uncommon facility in the attainment of it. It was a favourite maxim with him, that "man is equal to any thing, and that every thing might be atchieved by diligence and abſtinence †." His imagination,

* Love and Madneſs, p. 271.

† Ibid. p. 183. If any uncommon character was mentioned in his hearing, "All boy as he was, he would only obſerve, that the perſon in queſtion merited praiſe; but that God had ſent his creatures into the world with arms long enough to reach any thing, if they would be at the trouble of extending them." Ib.

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tion, like Dryden's, was more fertile than correct; and he ſeems to have erred rather through haſte and negligence, than through any deficiency of taſte. He was above that puerile affectation which pretends to borrow nothing; he knew that original genius conſiſts in forming new and happy combinations, rather than in ſearching after thoughts and ideas which never had occurred before; and that the man who never imitated, has ſeldom acquired a habit of good writing. If thoſe poems, which paſs under the name of Rowley, be really the productions of Chatterton, he poſſeſſed the ſtrongeſt marks of a vigorous imagination and a ſound judgment, in forming great, conſiſtent, and ingenious plots, and making choice of the moſt intereſting ſubjects. If Rowley and Chatterton be the ſame, it will be difficult to ſay whether he excelled moſt in the ſublime or the ſatirical; and as a univerſal genius, he muſt rank

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above Dryden, and perhaps only ſtand ſecond to Shakeſpeare. If, on the other hand, we are to judge altogether from thoſe pieces which are confeſſedly his own, we muſt undoubtedly aſſign the preference to thoſe of the ſatirical claſs. In moſt of his ſerious writings, there is little that indicates their being compoſed with a full reliſh; when he is ſatirical, his ſoul glows in his compoſition.

Mr. Catcott affirms that Chatterton underſtood no language but his mother tongue; the ſame fact ſeems to be implied in his own confeſſion, "that he ſpoke no tongue but his own *;" and it receives deciſive confirmation from the teſtimony of Mr. Smith, in his converſation with Dr. Glynn; yet we find him, even ſo early as the year 1768, annexing a Latin ſignature to the "Accounte of the Fryers paſſing

* Love and Madneſs, p. 198.

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paſſing the old Bridge," and there are ſome attempts at inſcriptions in old French, in the deſign which he planned for his own tomb-ſtone *. He, probably, might have acquired ſome little knowledge of both theſe languages; but even if this were the caſe, there can be no doubt that it was very ſuperficial. When we conſider the variety of his engagements while at Briſtol, his extenſive reading, and the great knowledge he had acquired of the ancient language of his native country, we cannot wonder that he had not time to occupy himſelf in the ſtudy of other languages; and after his arrival in London, he had a new and neceſſary ſcience to learn, the world; and that he made the moſt advantageous uſe of his time is evident from the extenſive knowledge of mankind diſplayed in the different eſſays, which he produced occaſionally for periodical publications.

* Chatterton's Will, in App. to Miſc.

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cations. The lively and vigorous imagination of Chatterton contributed, doubtleſs, to animate him with that ſpirit of enterpriſe, which led him to form ſo many impracticable and viſionary ſchemes, for the acquiſition of fame and fortune. His ambition was evident from his earlieſt youth; and perhaps the inequality of his ſpirits might, in a great meaſure, depend upon the fairneſs of his views, or the diſſipation of his projects. His melancholy was extreme on ſome occaſions, and, at thoſe times, he conſtantly argued in favour of ſuicide. Mr. Catcott left him one evening totally depreſſed; but he returned the next morning with unuſual ſpirits. He ſaid, "he had ſprung a mine," and produced a parchment, containing the *Sprytes*, a poem, now in the poſſeſſion of Mr. Barrett *.

His

* From the information of Mr. Seward.

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His natural melancholy was not corrected by the irreligious principles, which he had ſo unfortunately imbibed. To theſe we are certainly to attribute his premature death; and, if he can be proved guilty of the licentiouſneſs which is by ſome laid to his charge, it is reaſonable to believe that a ſyſtem, which exonerates the mind from the apprehenſion of future puniſhment, would not contribute much to reſtrain the criminal exceſſes of the paſſions. Had Chatterton lived, and been fortunate enough to fall into ſettled and ſober habits of life, his excellent underſtanding would, in all probability, have led him to ſee the fallacy of thoſe principles, which he had haſtily embraced; as it was, the only preſervatives of which he was poſſeſſed againſt the contagion of vice, were the enthuſiaſm of literature, and that delicacy of ſentiment which taſte and reading inſpire. But though theſe auxiliaries are not wholly to be

deſpiſed, we have too many inſtances of their inefficacy in ſupporting the cauſe of virtue, to place any confident reliance on them.

Under ſuch circumſtances there is little cauſe for ſurprize, if the paſſions of Chatterton ſhould frequently have treſpaſſed the boundaries of reaſon and moral duty. That he had ſtrong reſentments is evident from his great diſpoſition to ſatire, and particularly from the letter which has been mentioned as written by him to his ſchool-maſter, ſoon after the commencement of his apprenticeſhip. That he was "proud and imperious," is allowed by his ſiſter, and the generality of his acquaintance. He ſtands charged with a profligate attachment to women; the accuſation, however, is ſtated in a vague and deſultory manner, as if from common report, without any direct or decided evidence in ſupport of the opinion. To the regularity

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rity of his conduct during his reſidence in Briſtol, ſome reſpectable teſtimonies have been already exhibited. It is, indeed, by no means improbable, that a young man of ſtrong paſſions, and unprotected by religious principles, might frequently be unprepared to reſiſt the temptations of a licentious metropolis; yet, even after his arrival in London, there are ſome proofs in his favour, which ought not to be diſregarded. During a reſidence of nine weeks at Mr. Walmſley's, he never ſtaid out beyond the family hours, except one night, when Mrs. Ballance knew that he lodged at the houſe of a relation*.

Whatever may be the truth of theſe reports, the liſt of his virtues ſtill appears to exceed the catalogue of his faults. His temperance was in ſome reſpects exemplary. He ſeldom eat animal food, and never taſted any ſtrong or ſpirituous liquors:

* Love and Madneſs, p. 261.

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quors: he lived chiefly on a morſel of bread or a tart, with a draught of water. His ſiſter affirms, that he was a lover of truth from the earlieſt dawn of reaſon; and that his ſchool-maſter depended on his veracity on all occaſions *: the pride of genius will ſeldom deſcend to the moſt contemptible of vices, falſehood. His high ſenſe of dignity has been already noticed in two moſt ſtriking inſtances; but the moſt amiable feature in his character, was his generoſity and attachment to his mother and relations. Every favourite project for his advancement in life was accompanied with promiſes and encouragement to them; while in London, he continued to ſend them preſents, at a time when he was known himſelf to be in want: and indeed, the unremitting attention, kindneſs and reſpect, which appear in the whole of his conduct towards them, are deſerving the imitation of thoſe der

* Mrs. N's letter, ibid.

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in more fortunate circumſtances, and under the influence of better principles of faith than Chatterton poſſeſſed *.

He had a number of friends, and notwithſtanding his diſpoſition to ſatire, he is ſcarcely known to have had any enemies. By the accounts of all who were acquainted with him, there was ſomething uncommonly inſinuating in his manner and converſation. Mr. Croſs informed Mr. Warton, that in Chatterton's frequent viſits while he reſided at Brook-ſtreet, he found his converſation, a little infidelity excepted, moſt captivating †. His extenſive, though in many inſtances, ſuperficial knowledge, united with his genius; wit and fluency, muſt have admirably accompliſhed him for the pleaſures of ſociety, His pride, which perhaps

* It can never be ſufficiently lamented, that this amiable propenſity was not more uniform in Chatterton. A real love for his relations ought to have arreſted the hand of ſuicide; but when religion is loſt, all uniformity of principle is loſt. O.

† Warton's Inquiry, 107.

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haps should rather be termed the strong consciousness of intellectual excellence, did not destroy his affability. He was always accessible, and rather forward to make acquaintance, than apt to decline the advances of others*. There is reason, however to believe, that the inequality of his spirits, affected greatly his behaviour in company. His fits of absence were frequent and long. "He would often look stedfastly in a person's face without speaking, or seeming to see the person, for a quarter of an hour or more†."

Chatterton had one ruling passion which governed his whole conduct, and that was the desire of literary fame; this passion intruded itself on every occasion, and absorbed his whole attention. Whether he would have

* "Last week being in the pit of Drury Lane theatre, "I contracted an immediate acquaintance (which you know "is no hard task to me) with a young gentleman, &c. Letter to his mother, Love and Madness, p. 197.

† Love and Madness, p. 214.

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have continued to improve or the contrary, muſt have depended in ſome meaſure on the circumſtances of his future life. Had he fallen into profligate habits and connections, he would probably have loſt a great part of his ardour for the cultivation of his mind; and his maturer age would only have diminiſhed the admiration which the efforts of his childhood have ſo juſtly excited.

At the ſhrine of Chatterton, ſome grateful incenſe has been offered. Mr. Warton ſpeaks of him as "a prodigy of genius," as, "a ſingular inſtance of a prematurity of abilities." He adds, that "he poſſeſſed a comprehenſion of mind, and an activity of underſtanding, which predominated over his ſituation in life, and his opportunities of inſtruction*." And Mr. Malone "believes him to have been the greateſt genius that England has produced

* Hiſtory of Engliſh poetry.

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duced ſince the days of Shakeſpear *." Mr. Croft †, the ingenious author of Love and Madneſs, to whom in the courſe of this work I have had many obligations, is ſtill more unqualified in his praiſes. He aſſerts, that "no ſuch human being, at any period of life, has ever been known, or poſſibly ever will be known." He adds, in another place, "an army of Macedonian and Swediſh mad butchers, indeed, fly before him; nor does my memory ſupply me with any human being, who, at ſuch an age, with ſuch diſadvantages, has produced ſuch compoſitions ‡. Under

* Curſory Obſervations on the Poems attributed to Rowley, p. 41.

† Editor of an intended new Engliſh Dictionary.

‡ *Mohammed*, it is true, with hardly the uſual education of his illiterate tribe, unable (as was imagined, and he pretended) even to read or write, *forged* the KORAN; which is to this day the moſt elegant compoſition in the Arabic language, and its ſtandard of excellence. Upon the argument of improbability, that a man ſo illiterate ſhould compoſe a book ſo admired, *Mohammed* artfully reſted the principal

Under the Heathen mythology, ſuperſtition and admiration would have explained all by bringing Apollo upon earth: nor would the god ever have deſcended with more credit to himſelf."

The following parallel alſo by the ſame ingenious critic, does equal credit to the ingenuity of its author, and the reputation of Chatterton.

Milton	Chatterton
Milton enjoyed every advantage not only of private, but of public, not only of domeſtic, but of foreign education.	Chatterton wanted every advantage of every poſſible education.

cipal evidence of his *Koran*'s divinity. (Sale's Koran, P. Diſcourſe, p. 42, 60.) He, who, merely from improbability, denies Chatterton to be the author of Rowley's Poems, muſt go near to admit God to be the author of the *Koran*. But, before we compare together Chatterton and Mohammed, it ſhould be remembered that Mohammed was *forty* when he commenced prophet. Perhaps the moſt extraordinary circumſtance about Mohammed is, that even familiarity could not ſink him into contempt; that he contrived to be a hero and a prophet, even to his wives and his *valets de chambre*. Even his fits of the epilepſy he converted into proofs of his divine miſſion. It is probable, that, if *Mohammed* had been leſs ſalacious, and not ſubject

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Milton in his youth received ſuch inſtructions from teachers and ſchoolmaſters, that, in his age, he was able to become a ſchoolmaſter, and a teacher to others.

Milton's juvenile writings would not have juſtified a prophecy of Paradiſe Loſt: but the author of them flatters himſelf, by dating his life 15 till he had turned 16.

Milton did not produce *Comus* much earlier than in his 26th year; ſince it was firſt preſented at Ludlow in 1634, and he was born in 1608. In 1645, when he was 37, Allegro and Penſeroſo, firſt appeared. In 1655, when he was 47, after *long chooſing, and beginning late*, he ſet himſelf to turn a ſtrange thing, called a Myſtery, into an epic poem; which was not completed in leſs than Chatterton's whole active exiſtence, ſince the copy was not ſold till April, 1667,

Chatterton became his own teacher and his own ſchoolmaſter before other children are ſubjects for inſtruction; and never knew any other.

Few, if any, of Milton's juvenile writings would have been owned by Chatterton, at leaſt by Rowley, could he have paſt for the author of them.

Chatterton, not ſuffered to be *long chooſing*, or to *begin late*, in 17 years and 9 months, reckoning from his cradle to his grave, produced the volume of Rowley's poems, his volume of Miſcellanies, and many things which are not printed, beſide what his indignation tore in pieces the day he ſpurned at the world, and threw himſelf on the anger of his Creator.

to the falling ſickneſs, out of thirty equal diviſions of the known world, whereof Chriſtianity claims five, and Paganiſm nineteen, the inhabitants of ſix would not now believe in the *Koran*.

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1667, and then conſiſted only of 10 books. With all its glorious perfections, Paradiſe Loſt contains puerilities, to which Chatterton was a ſtranger. In 3 years more, when he was 62, appeared Milton's Hiſtory of England. Paradiſe Regained, and Sampſon, were publiſhed in the ſame year. Lycidas I had forgotten. It was written in his 29th year. That propriety of character and ſituation, which Chatterton can ſeldom have violated, or he would not to this moment deceive ſuch and ſo many men, Milton ſeldom preſerves in Lycidas. If, in the courſe of an exiſtence almoſt four times longer than Chatterton's, this man (*fallen on evil days and evil tongues*, with leſs truth than Chatterton), who bore no fruit worth gathering till after the age at which Chatterton was withered by the hand of Death—if, I ſay, this great man produced other writings, he will not quarrel that poſterity has forgotten them; if he ſhould, poſterity will ſtill perhaps forget them.

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Milton's manuſcripts, preſerved at Cambridge, bear teſtimony to his frequent and commendable correction.

What time could Chatterton have found for alteration or correction, when I maintain that any boy who ſhould only have fairly *tranſcribed*, before his 18th year, all that Chatterton, before his 18th year, invented and compoſed, would be thought to deſerve the reputation of diligence, and the praiſe of application?

Milton, as Ellwood relates, could never bear to hear Paradiſe Loſt preferred before Paradiſe Regained. He is known to have pronounced Dryden to be no poet.

If Chatterton, much earlier in life than Milton was calculated either to be an author or a critick; had not poſſeſſed a chaſter judgment, he would not ſtill impoſe on ſo many criticks and authors.

Milton, more from inclination than want of bread, it ſeems, entered into party diſputes, whether a king might be lawfully beheaded, &c. with a ſervility and a virulence, and let out his praiſe to hire, perhaps, with a meanneſs, at all periods of his life, which the worſt enemies of Chatterton cannot prove him to have equalled.

Chatterton, in order to procure bread for himſelf, a grandmother, mother and ſiſter, was ready to prove the patriotiſm of Bute, or of Beckford, in writings, which older men need not bluſh to own, and in an age when older men did not bluſh at ſuch a *profeſſion*.

Milton, in affluence (if compared with others beſide Chatterton)

Chatterton, ſteeped to the lips in poverty, entertained, long

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Chatterton) felt on his brows thoſe laurels which others could not ſee; and was perſuaded that, "by labour and "intenſe ſtudy, his portion "in this life, he might "leave ſomething ſo written "to after-times, as they "ſhould not willingly let it "die."

long before he had lived 18 years, ideas, hopes, perſuaſions, *(by labour and intenſe ſtudy,* more truly *his portion in this life* than Milton's) of living to all eternity in the memory of Fame.

Paradiſe Loſt produced the author and the widow only 28 pounds. The meaner, more ſervile, and more verſatile abilities of the author produced him indeed enough to be deprived of four thouſand pounds by ill-fortune, and to leave fifteen hundred pounds to his family.

Mr. Catcott and Mr. Barrett muſt inform the world whether Rowley's poems and his own together produced Chatterton 28 ſhillings.

Phillips relates of Milton, from his own mouth, that "his vein never happily "flowed but from the "autumnal equinox to "the vernal." Richardſon writes, that "his poetical "faculty would on a ſub-"den ruſh upon him with "an impetus or æſtrum."

What is ſaid of Chatterton, and of the moon's effect upon him, you have read.

Milton, when a man, ſeldom drank any thing ſtrong: he ate with delicacy and temperance.

Chatterton, when a boy, hardly ever touched meat, and drank only water: when a child, he would often re-

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fuſe to take any thing but bread and water, even if it did happen that his mother had a hot meal, "becauſe "he had a work in hand, "and he muſt not make "himſelf more ſtupid than "God had made him."

Milton's hiſtorians and grand-daughter admit his moroſeneſs to his children, and that he would not let them learn to write.

Chatterton's mother, his ſiſter and his letters, can ſpeak beſt of his heart, and of his wiſhes that his ſiſter might learn every thing.

To theſe I ſhall add the teſtimony of Mr. Knox:

"Unfortunate boy! ſhort and evil were thy days, but thy fame ſhall be immortal. Hadſt thou been known to the munificent patrons of genius—

"Unfortunate boy! poorly waſt thou accommodated during thy ſhort ſojourning among us;—rudely waſt thou treated,—ſorely did thy feeling ſoul ſuffer from the ſcorn of the unworthy; and there are, at laſt,

laſt, thoſe who wiſh to rob thee of thy only meed, thy poſthumous glory. Severe too are the cenſurers of thy morals. In the gloomy moments of deſpondency, I fear thou haſt uttered impious and blaſphemous thoughts, which none can defend, and which neither thy youth, nor thy fiery ſpirit, nor thy ſituation, can excuſe. But let thy more rigid cenſors reflect, that thou waſt literally and ſtrictly but a boy. Let many of thy bittereſt enemies reflect what were their own religious principles, and whether they had any, at the age of fourteen, fifteen, and ſixteen. Surely it is a ſevere and an unjuſt ſurmiſe, that thou wouldeſt probably have ended thy life as a victim of the laws, if thou hadſt not finiſhed it as thou didſt; ſince the very act by which thou durſt put an end to thy painful exiſtence, proves that thou thoughteſt it better to die,

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die, than to ſupport life by theft or violence.

" The ſpectulative errors of a boy who wrote from the ſudden ſuggeſtions of paſſion or deſpondency, who is not convicted of any immoral or diſhoneſt act in conſequence of his ſpeculations, ought to be conſigned to oblivion. But there ſeems to be a general and inveterate diſlike to the boy, excluſively of the poet; a diſlike which many will be ready to impute, and, indeed, not without the appearance of reaſon, to that inſolence and envy of the little great, which cannot bear to acknowledge ſo tranſcendent and commanding a ſuperiority in the humble child of want and obſcurity.

" Malice, if there was any, may ſurely now be at reſt; for " Cold he lies in the grave below." But where were ye, O ye friends to genius, when, ſtung with diſ-

appointment,

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appointment, diſtreſſed for food and raiment, with every frightful form of human miſery painted on his fine imagination, poor Chatterton ſunk in deſpair? Alas! ye knew him not then, and now it is to late,—

> For now he is dead;
> Gone to his death bed,
> All under the willow tree.

So ſang the ſweet youth, in as tender an elegy as ever flowed from a feeling heart.

" In return for the pleaſure I have received from thy poems, I pay thee, poor boy, the trifling tribute of my praiſe. Thyſelf thou haſt emblazoned; thine own monument thou haſt erected: But they whom thou haſt delighted, feel a pleaſure in vindicating thine honours from the rude attacks of detraction *".

The

* Knox's Eſſays, No. 144.

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The poetic eulogiums have, however, exceeded, both in number and excellence, the compliments of critical writers; a few remarkably intereſting and beautiful, I ſhall ſelect, with the double view of adorning the work, and gratifying the reader.

A poet, whoſe ſuperior elegance and claſſical taſte do not appear to have met with all the applauſe they have deſerved, thus ſpeaks of Chatterton:

" Yet as with ſtreaming eye the ſorrowing muſe,
" Pale CHATTERTON's untimely urn bedews;
" Her accents ſhall arraign the partial care,
" That ſhielded not her ſon from cold deſpair *.

There is a beautiful monody written by Mrs. Cowley, inſerted in the laſt edition of Love and Madneſs.—It is as follows:

O CHATTERTON! for thee the penſive ſong I raiſe,
Thou object of my wonder, pity, envy, praiſe!
Bright Star of Genius!—torn from life and fame,
My tears, my verſe, ſhall conſecrate thy name!

Ye

* Pye's Progreſs of Refinement, Part 2.

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Ye Muſes! who around his natal bed
Triumphant ſung, and all your influence ſhed;
Apollo! thou who rapt his infant breaſt,
And in his dædal numbers ſhone confeſt,
Ah! why, in vain, ſuch mighty gifts beſtow?
—Why give freſh tortures to the Child of Woe?
Why thus, with barb'rous care, illume his mind,
Adding new ſenſe to all the ills behind?

Thou haggard Poverty! whoſe cheerleſs eye
Transforms young Rapture to the pond'rous ſigh,
In whoſe drear cave no Muſe e'er ſtruck the lyre,
Nor Bard e'er madden'd with poetic fire;
Why all thy ſpells for Chatterton combine?
His thought creative, why muſt thou confine?
Subdu'd by thee, his pen no more obeys,
No longer gives the ſong of ancient days;
Nor paints in glowing tints from diſtant ſkies,
Nor bids wild ſcen'ry ruſh upon our eyes——
Check'd in her flight, his rapid Genius cowers,
Drops her ſad plumes, and yields to thee her powers.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

Behold him, Muſes! ſee your fav'rite ſon
The prey of want, ere manhood is begun!
The boſom ye have fill'd, with anguiſh torn——
The mind you cheriſh'd, drooping and forlorn!

And now Deſpair her ſable form extends,
Creeps to his couch, and o'er his pillow bends.
Ah, ſee! a deadly bowl the fiend conceal'd,
Which to his eye with caution is reveal'd——
Seize it, Apollo!—ſeize the liquid ſnare!
Daſh it to earth, or diſſipate in air!
Stay, hapleſs Youth! refrain—abhor the draught,
With pangs, with racks, with deep repentance fraught!

Oh,

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Oh, hold! the cup with woe ETERNAL flows,
More—more than Death the pois'nous juice beſtows!
In vain!—he drinks—and now the ſearching fires
Ruſh through his veins, and writhing he expires!
No ſorrowing friend, no ſiſter, parent, nigh,
To ſooth his pangs, or catch his parting ſigh;
Alone, unknown, the Muſe's darling dies,
And with the vulgar dead unnoted lies!
Bright Star of Genius!—torn from life and fame,
My tears, my verſe, ſhall conſecrate thy name!

Nor has the Muſe of Amwell been backward in commendation.

And BRISTOL! why thy ſcenes explore,
And why thoſe ſcenes ſo ſoon reſign,
And fail to ſeek the ſpot that bore
That wonderous tuneful Youth of thine,
The Bard, whoſe boaſted ancient ſtore
Roſe recent from his own exhauſtleſs mine †!

Though Fortune all her gifts denied,
Though Learning made him not her choice,
The Muſe ſtill placed him at her ſide,
And bade him in her ſmile rejoice—
Deſcription ſtill his pen ſupplied,
Pathos his thought, and Melody his voice!

Conſcious and proud of merit high,
Fame's wreath he boldly claim'd to wear;

But

† This is at leaſt the Author's opinion, notwithſtanding all that has hitherto appeared on the other ſide of the queſtion. The laſt line alludes to one of the ingenious Mr. Maſon in his Elegy to a young Nobleman:

"See from the depths of his exhauſtleſs mine
"His glittering ſtores the tuneful ſpendthrift throws."

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But Fame, regardleſs, paſs'd him by,
Unknown, or deem'd unworth her care:
The Sun of Hope forſook his ſky;
And all his land look'd dreary, bleak, and bare!

Then Poverty, grim ſpectre, roſe,
And horror o'er the proſpect threw—
His deep diſtreſs too nice to expoſe;
Too nice for common aid to ſue,
A dire alternative he choſe,
And raſhly from the painful ſcene withdrew.

Ah! why for Genius' headſtrong rage
Did Virtue's hand no curb prepare?
What boots, poor youth! that now thy page
Can boaſt the public praiſe to ſhare,
The learn'd in deep reſearch engage,
And lightly entertain the gentle fair?

Ye, who ſuperfluous wealth command,
O why your kind relief delay'd?
O why not ſnatch'd his deſperate hand?
His foot on Fate's dread brink not ſtay'd?
What thanks had you your native-land
For a new SHAKESPEARE or new MILTON paid!

For me—Imagination's power
Leads oft inſenſibly my way,
To where, at midnight's ſilent hour,
The creſcent moon's ſlow-weſtering ray
Pours full on REDCLIFF'S lofty tower,
And gilds with yellow light its walls of grey.

'Midſt Toil and Commerce ſlumbering round,
Lull'd by the riſing tide's hoarſe roar,
There Frome and Avon willow-crown'd,
I view ſad-wandering by the ſhore,

With

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With ſtreaming tears, and notes of mournful ſound,
Too late their hapleſs Bard, untimely loſt, deplore.

The following lines are uncommonly animated and poetical:

If changing times ſuggeſt the pleaſing hope,
That Bards no more with adverſe fortune cope;
That in this alter'd clime, where Arts increaſe,
And make our poliſh'd Iſle a ſecond Greece;
That now, if Poeſy proclaims her Son,
And challenges the wreath by Fancy won;
Both Fame and Wealth adopt him as their heir,
And liberal Grandeur makes his life her care;
From ſuch vain thoughts thy erring mind defend,
And look on CHATTERTON's diſaſtrous end.
Oh, ill-ſtarr'd Youth, whom Nature form'd in vain,
With powers on Pindus' ſplendid height to reign!
O dread example of what pangs await
Young Genius ſtruggling with malignant fate!
What could the Muſe, who fir'd thy infant frame
With the rich promiſe of Poetic fame;
Who taught thy hand its magic art to hide,
And mock the inſolence of Critic pride;
What cou'd her unavailing cares oppoſe,
To ſave her darling from his deſperate foes;
From preſſing Want's calamitous controul,
And Pride, the fever of the ardent ſoul?
Ah, ſee, too conſcious of her failing power,
She quits her Nurſling in his deathful hour!
In a chill room, within whoſe wretched wall
No cheering voice replies to Miſery's ca l;
Near a vile bed, too crazy to ſuſtain
Misfortune's waſted limbs, convuls'd with pain,

On

BIBLIOTH: CA: BODLEIANA

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On the bare floor, with heaven-directed eyes,
The hapleſs Youth in ſpeechleſs horror lies!
The pois'nous phial, by diſtraction drain'd,
Rolls from his hand, in wild contortion ſtrain'd:
Pale with life-waſting pangs, it's dire effect,
And ſtung to madneſs by the world's neglect,
He, in abhorrence of the dangerous Art,
Once the dear idol of his glowing heart,
Tears from his Harp the vain deteſted wires,
And in the frenzy of Deſpair expires* !

Again, with all the honeſt reſentment of indignant Genius,

Search the dark ſcenes were drooping Genius lies,
And keep from ſorrieſt ſights a nation's eyes,
That, from expiring Want's reproaches free,
Our generous country ne'er may weep to ſee
A future CHATTERTON by poiſon dead,
An OTWAY fainting for a little bread†.

To theſe elegant offerings to the genius of Chatterton, it is with peculiar pleaſure I add a ſonnet to expreſſion, from the poliſhed and pathetic pen of Miſs Helen Maria Williams.

Expreſſion, child of ſoul! I fondly trace
Thy ſtrong enchantments, when the poet's lyre,
The painter's pencil catch thy ſacred fire,
And beauty wakes for thee her touching grace—
But from this frighted glance thy form avert
When horrors check thy tear, thy ſtruggling ſigh,
When frenzy rolls in thy impaſſion'd eye,
Or guilt ſits heavy on thy lab'ring heart—

* Hayley's Eſſay on Epic Poetry, Ep. iv. l. 211 to 248.
† Ibid, 336 to 342.

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Nor ever let my ſhudd'ring fancy bear
The waſting groan, or view the pallid look
Of him * the Muſes lov'd—when hope forſook
His ſpirit, vainly to the Muſes dear!
For charm'd with heav'nly ſong, this bleeding breaſt,
Mourns the bleſt power of verſe could give deſpair no reſt.—

Independent of the poems attributed to Rowley, Chatterton has left behind him a variety of pieces, publiſhed and unpubliſhed; the moſt conſiderable of the former are to be found in a volume of miſcellanies, publiſhed in 1778, to which is prefixed a ſketch for the late Alderman Beckford's ſtatue, a ſpecimen of Chatterton's abilities in the arts of drawing and deſign; and this publication was followed in 1786, by "a ſuppliment to the miſcellanies of Thomas Chatterton." The compoſitions contained in both theſe volumes are ſcarcely to be inſpected with all the ſeverity of criticiſm. Conſiderable allowances ought to be made for the exerciſes of

* Chatterton.

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of his infantine years, for the incorrect effuſions of momentary reſentment, for a few lines thrown together in a playful mood to pleaſe an illiterate female, or to amuſe a ſchool-fellow, and perhaps not leſs for the haſty and involuntary productions of indigence and neceſſity, conſtructed for a magazine, and calculated for the ſole purpoſe of procuring a ſubſiſtence. Of the poetical part of theſe miſcellanies, I have already intimated, that the ſerious are inferior to the ſatirical.

In the elegy to the memory of Mr. Thomas Phillips, of Fairford, we, however, meet with ſome deſcriptive ſtanzas, perhaps not unworthy the author of Rowley's poems:

" Pale rugged Winter bending o'er his head,
" His grizzled hair bedropt with icy dew;
" His eyes, a duſky light, congealed and dead;
" His robe, a tinge of bright ethereal blue.
" His train a motley'd, ſanguine ſable cloud,
" He limps along the ruſſet dreary moor;
" Whilſt riſing whirlwinds, blaſting, keen and loud,
" Roll the white ſurges to the ſounding ſhore."

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" Fancy, whoſe various, figure-tinctured veſt
" Was ever changing to a different hue;
" Her head, with varied bays and flow'rets dreſt,
" Her eyes two ſpangles of the morning dew."

" Now as the mantle of the evening ſwells,
" Upon my mind I feel a thick'ning gloom!
" Ah! could I charm, by friendſhip's potent ſpells,
" The ſoul of Philip's from the deathy tomb!
" Then would we wander thro' the dark'ned vale,
" In converſe ſuch as heavenly ſpirits uſe,
" And borne upon the plumage of the gale,
" Hymn the creator and exhort the Muſe*."

In a letter to his friend Cary, dated London, July 1, 1770, Chatterton tells him, " in the laſt London magazine, and in that which comes out to day, are the only two pieces of mine I have the vanity to call poetry." Theſe were the two African Eclogues, publiſhed in his Miſcellanies. I am ſorry I cannot unite with the author in the commendation of theſe pieces; but Chatterton, as well as Milton, ſeems to have been incapable of eſtimating rightly the reſpective merits of his own

* Chatterton's Miſcellanies.

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own productions *. They are unconnected and unequal, though it must be confessed, that they contain some excellent lines; the following occur almost at the beginning of the first eclogue, and are animated, expressive and harmonious:

"High from the ground the youthful warriors sprung,
"Loud on the concave shell the lances rung:
"In all the mystic mazes of the dance,
"The youths of Banny's burning sands advance,
"Whilst the soft virgin, panting, looks behind,
"And rides upon the pinions of the wind †."

Of the correctness of the following simile in the second eclogue, I shall not determine; but the livelineſs of the description evinces a most vigorous imagination.

"On Tiber's banks, close rank'd, a warring train,
"Stretch'd to the distant edge of Galca's plain:
"So when arrived at Gaigra's highest steep,
"We view the wide expansion of the deep;
"See in the gilding of her wat'ry robe,
"The quick declension of the circling globe;

* I know some respectable friends, who esteem this instance of bad taste, as a strong presumptive argument against Chatterton being the author of Rowley's poems.

† Chatterton's Miscellanies, p. 56.

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" From the blue ſea a chain of mountains riſe,
" Blended at once with water and with ſkies:
" Beyond our ſight in vaſt extenſion curl'd,
" The check of waves, the guardian of the world *."

The ſatire of Chatterton has more of the luxuriance, fluency, and negligence of Dryden, than of the terſeneſs and refinement of Pope. The following lines are in the ſtyle of the former:

" Search nature o'er, procure me, if you can,
" The fancied character, an honeſt man.
" A man of ſenſe not honeſt by conſtraint,
" (For fools are canvaſs, living but in paint)
" To Mammon, or to ſuperſtition ſlaves,
" All orders of mankind are fools or knaves:
" In the firſt attribute by none ſurpaſs'd,
" * * * * endeavours to obtain the laſt †."

The following is an evident imitation of Mr. Pope, even to the cadence of the verſe, but it is not equally ſucceſsful with the laſt ſpecimen:

" But why muſt Chatterton ſelected ſit,
" The butt of every Critic's little wit?
" Am I alone for ever in a crime,
" *Nonſenſe in proſe*, or *blaſphemy in rhyme*?

" All

* Chatterton's Miſcellanies, p. 56.
† Epiſtle to the Rev. Mr. Catcott, Append. to Chat. Miſ. p. 23.

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" All monoſyllables a line appears!—
" Is it not very often ſo in Shears?
" See gen'rous Eccas, length'ning out my praiſe,
" Inraptured with the muſic of my lays;
" In all the arts of panegyric grac'd,
" The cream of modern literary taſte*."

In a poem on Happineſs, inſerted in Love and Madneſs, are ſome ſtrokes of ſatire in a ſuperior ſtyle:

" Come to my pen, companion of the lay,
" And ſpeak of worth, where merit ———
" Let lazy B——— undiſtinguiſh'd ſnore,
" Nor laſh his generoſity to ———,
" Praiſe him for ſermons of his curate bought,
" His eaſy flow of words, his depth of thought;
" His active ſpirit ever in diſplay,
" His great devotion when he drawls to pray,
" His fainted ſoul diſtinguiſhably ſeen,
" With all the virtues of a modern Dean†."

" Pulvis, whoſe knowledge centres in degrees,
" Is never happy but when taking fees:
" Bleſt with a buſhy wig and ſolemn pace,
" Catcott admires him for a *foſſile* face."
—" Mould'ring in duſt the fair Lavinia lies,
" Death and our Doctor clos'd her ſparkling eyes,
" O all ye pow'rs, the guardians of the world!
" Where is the uſeleſs bolt of vengeance hurl'd?

* The Defence, ibid. p. 37.
† Love and Madneſs, p. 155.

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" Say, ſhall this leaden ſword of plague prevail,
" And kill the mighty where the mighty fail?
" Let the red bolus tremble o'er his head,
" And with his guardian julep ſtrike him dead*!"

In the volume of his miſcellanies are two political pieces, the Conſuliad, written at Briſtol, and in the higheſt ſtrain of party ſcurrility†; and the Prophecy, written apparently a ſhort time after, which is in the beſt ſtyle of Swift's minor

* Love and Madneſs, 156.

† The introduction to this poem is not deſtitute of merit.

Of warring ſenators, and battles dire,
Of quails uneaten; Muſe, awake the lyre.
Where C—pb—ll's chimneys overlook the ſquare,
And N—t—n's future proſpects hang in air;
Where counſellors diſpute, and cockers match,
And Caledonian earls in concert ſcratch;
A group of heroes, occupied the round,
Long in the rolls of infamy renown'd,
Circling the table all in ſilence ſat,
Now tearing bloody lean, now champing fat;
Now picking ortolans, and chicken ſlain,
To form the whimſies of an *à-la-reine:*
Now ſtorming caſtles of the neweſt taſte,
And granting articles to forts of paſte:
Now ſwallowing bitter draughts of Pruſſian beer;
Now ſucking tallow of ſalubrious deer,

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nor pieces, and appears to be the genuine effuſion of that enthuſiaſtic love of liberty, which in tumultuous times generally takes poſſeſſion of young and ſanguine diſpoſitions*. Of

* THE PROPHECY.

This truth of old was ſorrow's friend,
" Times at the worſt will ſurely mend."
The difficulty's then to know,
How long oppreſſion's clock can go;
When Britain's ſons may ceaſe to ſigh,
And hope that their redemption's nigh.

When Vice exalted takes the lead,
And Vengeance hangs but by a thread;
Gay peereſſes turn'd out o'doors;
Whoremaſters peers, and ſons of whores;
Look up, ye Britons! ceaſe to ſigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When vile Corruption's brazen face,
At council-board ſhall take her place;
And lords-commiſſioners reſort,
To welcome her at Britain's court;
Look up, ye Briotns! ceaſe to ſigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

See Penſion's harbour large and clear,
Defended by St. Stephen's pier!
The entrance ſafe, by Current led,
Tiding round G—'s jetty head;
Look up, ye Britons! ceaſe to ſigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When

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Of the proſe compoſitions of Chatterton, his imitations of Oſſian are certainly the worſt: he has not indeed improved upon an

When Civil-Power ſhall ſnore at eaſe,
While ſoldiers fire—to keep the peace;
When murders ſanctuary find,
And petticoats can Juſtice blind;
Look up, ye Britons! ceaſe to ſigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

Commerce o'er Bondage will prevail,
Free as the wind, that fills her ſail.
When ſhe complains of vile reſtraint,
And Power is deaf to her complaint;
Look up, ye Britons! ceaſe to ſigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When raw projectors ſhall begin
Oppreſſion's hedge, to keep her in;
She in diſdain will take her flight,
And bid the Gotham fools good night;
Look up, ye Britons! ceaſe to ſigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When tax is laid, to ſave debate,
By prudent miniſters of ſtate;
And, what the people did not give,
Is levied by prerogative;
Look up, ye Britons! ceaſe to ſigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When Popiſh biſhops dare to claim
Authority, in George's name;

By

an indifferent model. They are full of wild imagery and inconſiſtent metaphor, with

By Treaſon's hand ſet up, in ſpite
Of George's title, William's right;
Look up, ye Britons! ceaſe to ſigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When Popiſh prieſt a penſion draws
From ſtarv'd exchequer, for the cauſe
Commiſſion'd, proſelytes to make
In Britiſh realms, for Britain's ſake;
Look up, ye Britons! ceaſe to ſigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When ſnug in power, ſly recuſants
Make laws for Britiſh Proteſtants;
And d——g William's Revolution,
As Juſtices claim execution;
Look up, ye Britons! ceaſe to ſigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When ſoldiers, paid for our defence,
In wanton pride ſlay innocence;
Blood from the ground for vengeance reeks,
Till Heaven the inquiſition makes;
Look up, ye Britons! ceaſe to ſigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When at Bute's feet poor Freedom lies,
Mark'd by the prieſt for ſacrifice,
And doom'd a victim, for the ſins
Of half the *outs*, and all the *ins*;
Look up, ye Britons! ceaſe to ſigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When

with little either of plot or of character to recommend them.

His lighter Eſſays, ſuch as the adventures of a ſtar, the memoirs of a ſad dog, the

When Stewards paſs a *boot* account,
And credit for the groſs amount;
Then to replace exhauſted ſtore,
Mortgage the land to borrow more;
Look up, ye Britons! ceaſe to ſigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When ſcrutineers, for private ends,
Againſt the vote declare their friends;
Or judge, as you ſtand there alive,
That five is more than forty-five;
Look up, ye Britons! ceaſe to ſigh,
For your redemption draweth nigh.

When George ſhall condeſcend to hear
The modeſt ſuit, the humble prayer;
A prince, to purpled pride unknown!
No favourites diſgrace the throne!
Look up, ye Britons! ſigh no more,
For your redemption's at the door.

When time ſhall bring your wiſh about,
Or, ſeven-years leaſe, *you ſold*, is out;
No future contract to fulfil;
Your tenants holding at your will;
Raiſe up your heads! your right demand!
For your redemption's in your hand.

Then

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the hunter of oddities, &c. diſplay conſiderable knowledge of what is called the town, and demonſtrate the keenneſs of his obſervation, and his quickneſs in acquiring any branch of knowledge, or in adapting himſelf to any ſituation. We are to remember, however, that he had been long converſant in this ſpecies of compoſition, and that a conſiderable fund of reading in magazines, reviews, &c. which Mr. Warton obſerves "form the *ſchool of the people*," had prepared him well to exerciſe the profeſſion of a periodical writer. Antiquities, however, conſtituted his favorite ſtudy, and in them his genius always appears to the greateſt advantage; even the moſt humorous of his pieces (Tony Selwood's

Then is your time to ſtrike the blow,
And let the *ſlaves* of Mammon know,
Britain's true ſons A BRIBE can ſcorn,
And die as *free* as they were born.
VIRTUE again ſhall take her ſeat,
And your redemption ſtand compleat.

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wood's letter *) derives its principal excellence from his knowledge of ancient cuſtoms.

In the volume of Miſcellanies attributed to him, there are ſome pieces to which his title is not well aſcertained. Some with the ſignature of Aſaphides, are claimed by one Lockſtone, a linen-draper, and a particular acquaintance of Chatterton; and the ſtory of Maria Friendleſs, which Chatterton himſelf ſent to the Town and Country Magazine, probably for the ſake of obtaining an immediate and neceſſary ſupply of money, is almoſt a literal tranſcript of the letter of Miſella in the Rambler.

If the reputation of Chatterton, however, reſted ſolely on thoſe works, which he acknowledged as his own, it would neither be ſo extenſive as it is, nor probably

* Chatterton's Miſcellanies, p. 209.

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bably ſo permanent as it is likely to continue. Rowley's poems have deſervedly immortalized the name of Chatterton, and the controverſy which their publication excited, is the moſt curious and extraordinary controverſy, which, ſince the days of Bentley has divided the literary world.

I have already noticed the manner in which theſe poems are ſaid to have been diſcovered. The account which Chatterton himſelf gave of the ſuppoſed author is nearly as follows:

THOMAS ROWLEY was born at Norton. Mal-ſeward in Somerſetſhire, and educated at the convent of St. Kenna, at Keyneſham*. He was of the clerical profeſſion, was confeſſor to the two Canynge's, Robert and William, about the latter end of the reign of Henry the VIth, or

* Note prefixed to "Ballade of Charitie." Rowley's poems, p. 203.

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or about the beginning of that of Edward IV.; and was at leaſt connected with our lady's church in Briſtol *; though he is elſewhere ſtyled the "pariſh prieſt of St. John's, in the city of Briſtol †." After the death of Mr. Robert Canynge, (who at his brother's deſire, bequeathed Rowley 100 marks) he was employed by that brother, Mr. William, to travel through a conſiderable part of England to collect drawings. Mr. Canynge was ſo well ſatisfied with his ſucceſs, that he rewarded him with a purſe of two hundred pounds, and promiſed him that he ſhould never be in want. He continued afterwards the confidential friend of Canynge. He wrote a variety of poems, many of them addreſſed to that extraordinary character. He firſt lived in a houſe on the hill, and afterwards

* Memoirs of Sir W. Canynge, Chatterton's Miſcellanies, p. 122.

† Introduction to the Battle of Haſtings, Rowley's poems, p. 21.

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afterwards in one by the Tower *; he ſurvived his patron, and died at Weſtbury, in Glouceſterſhire †. Such is Chatterton's account; but it is only fair to mention, that the exiſtence of any ſuch perſon as Rowley, is totally denied by the diſputants on one ſide of the controverſy.

There can, however, be no doubt concerning the exiſtence of W. Canynge, the patron of Rowley, ſince it is atteſted by ſuch a number of contemporary hiſtorians, and his remains lie interred in the church of which he was the founder. He is called by Chatterton, Sir William Canynge. He was the younger ſon of a citizen of Briſtol, and in his youth afforded early prognoſtics of wiſdom and ability. He was of a handſome perſon, and married for love, without a fortune. Soon after his marriage, his father and

* Chatterton's Miſcellanies, p. 127 & 128.
† Rowley's Poems, p. 203.

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his eldeſt brother (who both loved money as much as he deſpiſed it) died, and left him large eſtates in land and money, and his brother John dependent upon him, whom he placed in ſuch an advantageous line of buſineſs, that he afterwards became Lord-Mayor of London.

This dawn of proſperity was, however, ſoon clouded by the death of his wife; to whoſe memory he afforded the moſt affectionate teſtimony, in rejecting the moſt ſplendid propoſals for a ſecond marriage. Of his native city he was Mayor five times; and in the year 1461, when Sir Baldwin Fulford was executed for treaſon, Canynge being then Mayor, pleaded for the criminal in vain. When he was knighted does not appear; but in the year 1467, a ſecond marriage being propoſed by the King, between him and one of the Widdeville, (the Queen's) family, Sir William went into holy orders purpoſely

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purpoſely to avoid it; and was ordained Acolythe by his friend Carpenter, Biſhop of Worceſter, the 19th of September. He was afterwards dean of the Collegiate church of Weſtbury in Wilts; with his uſual munificence he rebuilt that college, and died in the year 1474, with the univerſal character of learning and virtue. Among the proofs of his munificence there ſtill exiſt an alms-houſe or hoſpital, with a chapel, and the beautiful church of St. Mary Redcliffe, in Briſtol*. At a great expenſe he had collected a cabinet of curioſities†; his collection of manuſcripts, among which were copies of his own and Rowley's poems, were depoſited in a room in Redcliffe church: of the actual or pretended diſcovery of which I have already treated. Such is Chatterton's hiſtory of Canynge, in which, though

* Story of W. Canynge, Rowley's poems, Chatterton's Miſcellanies, p. 112 to 122. † Ibid.

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there are ſome facts, which are amply confirmed, there are alſo ſeveral which are diſputed by thoſe who deny the authenticity of Rowley's poems.

Theſe poems, we have already ſeen, were produced by Chatterton at different times, who aſſerted that he had copied them from the fragments of thoſe ancient parchments, which his father had procured from the Redcliffe cheſt; he could never be prevailed upon to produce any originals, except a few fragments, the largeſt not more than eight inches long, and four and a half wide. The writing on theſe fragments was at leaſt a tolerable imitation of ancient manuſcript, and the parchment or vellum had every mark of age. The only poetical originals which he produced were, the challenge to Lydgate, the ſong to Ella, and Lydgate's anſwer, all contained in one parchment; the account of W. Canynge's feaſt; the epitaph

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taph on Robert Canynge, and part of the ſtory of W. Canynge; beſides theſe there are ſome proſe compoſitions, and a few drawings, ſtill in the hands of Mr. Barrett *.

The poems attributed to Rowley were firſt collected in an octavo volume, and publiſhed by Mr. Tyrwhitt, the learned editor of Chaucer; a very ſplendid edition was afterwards publiſhed in quarto, by the late Dr. Milles, dean of Exeter, and preſident of the Society of Antiquaries, with a preliminary diſſertation, and notes tending to prove that they were really written by Rowley and others in the 15th century.

The

* A complete liſt of the original parchments, which were given to Mr. Barret by Chatterton, and which he has now in his hands, was communicated by that gentleman to Dr. Milles, and is as follows:

The Song to Ella, with the challenge to Lydgate and the

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The poetical merit of theſe pieces is conſiderable. The ſubjects are intereſting, and infinite imagination is diſplayed in the conſtruction of the plots or fables, in the arrangement

Anſwer. This poem was ſent by Mr. Barret to a friend, and is unfortunately loſt.

Canynge's Feaſt, a Poem.

The firſt thirty-ſix lines of the Storie of William Canynge.

The following are Hiſtorical Proſe Compoſitions.

1. The Yellow Roll, containing an account of the origin of coinage in England, and of the curioſities in Canynge's cabinet. This alſo was lent with the ſong to Ella, by Mr. Barret to a friend, and is loſt.
2. The purple Roll, thirteen inches by ten, containing an account of particular Coins, and the ſecond and third Sections of Turgotus's Hiſtory of Briſtol. N. B. The firſt Section above quoted is alſo extant in Chatterton's own hand, but the original does not appear.
3. Vita Burtoni, a parchment roll, about eight inches long, and four broad, very cloſely written; containing an account of Sir Simon de Burton, and his rebuilding Redclift church.
4. Knights Templars Church; a Hiſtory of its foundation, &c.
5. St. Mary's Church of the Port; a Hiſtory of it from its foundation, ending with the verſes on Robert Canynge.
6. Roll of Bartholomew's Priory, with a Liſt of the Priors.

7. An

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arrangement of the incidents, and the delineation of the characters. The beauties of poetry are ſcattered through them with no ſparing hand. The Lyric productions in particular, ſuch as the chorus's in the Tragedies, abound with luxuriant deſcription, moſt vivid imagery, and ſtriking metaphors. Through the veil of ancient language a happy adaptation of words

7. An account of the Chapel and Houſe of Calendaries; a drawing of the chapel, and underneath an explanation of it.
8. Ella's Chapple. No drawing, except to the Kiſt of Ella, but there is an account of its foundation.
9. St. Mary Magdalen's Chapel. A drawing only.
10. Grey Friars Church. A drawing only.
11. Drawing of three monumental Inſcriptions.
12. Ancient Monument and Rudhall: mere delineations.
13. Leſſer and Greater St. John's: only a rude delineation.
14. Several Drawings of the Caſtle of Briſtol.
15. Strong Hold of the Caſtle: a drawing and account of its foundation, by Robert Earl of Glouceſter, and Site thereof.
16. Old Wall of Briſtol; mere drawings.
17. Carne of Robert Curthoſes Mynde in Caſtle ſteed: a drawing or figure, with the words *Carne*, &c. underneath. Milles's Rowley, page 438.

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words is ſtill apparent, and a ſtyle both energetic and expreſſive. Contrary to almoſt all the poetical productions of the times, when they are ſuppoſed to have been compoſed, they are in general conſpicuous for the harmony and elegance of the verſe. Indeed, ſome paſſages are inferior in none of the eſſentials of poetry, to the moſt finiſhed productions of modern times.

On the other hand, it muſt not be diſſembled that ſome (and many will think no inconſiderable) part of the charm of theſe poems may probably reſult from the Gothic ſublimity of the ſtyle. Whatever is vulgar in language is loſt by time, and a ſmall degree of obſcurity in an ancient author gives a latitude to the fancy of the reader, who generally imagines the ſtyle to be more forcible and expreſſive than perhaps it intrinſically is. We gaze with wonder on an antique fa-

brick,

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brick; and when novelty of thought is not to be obtained, the novelty of language to which we are unaccuſtomed, is frequently accepted as a ſubſtitute. Moſt poets therefore, at leaſt ſuch as have aſpired to the ſublime, have thrown their dialect at leaſt a century behind the common proſe, and colloquial phraſelogy of their time; nor can we entertain a doubt, but that even Shakeſpear and Milton have derived advantages from the antique ſtructure of ſome of their moſt admired paſſages. The facility of compoſition is alſo greatly increaſed where full latitude is permitted in the uſe of an obſolete dialect; ſince an author is indulged in the occaſional uſe of both the old and the modern phraſeology, and if the one does not ſupply him with the word for which he has immediate occaſion, the other in all probability will not diſappoint him.

That

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That the ſubjects of Rowley's poems are in general intereſting and well choſen, cannot, I think, be doubted by the judicious reader, but ſtill it muſt be confeſſed, that the detail is occaſionally heavy, flat, and inſipid. The imagery and metaphors are frequently very common-place, and it is poſſible to labour through ſeveral ſtanzas without finding any ſtriking beauty, when the attention of the reader is kept alive by the ſubject alone. Many defects of ſtyle, and many paſſages of rant and bombaſt are concealed or excuſed by the appearance of antiquity; and where the harmony of the verſe (which indeed is not often the caſe) is, perhaps, radically deficient, we are inclined to attribute it to a different mode of accenting, or to our ignorance of the ancient pronunciation.

The piece of moſt conſpicuous merit in the collection, is Ella, a Tragical Interlude, which is a moſt complete and well-

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well-written tragedy. The plot is both intereſting and full of variety, though the dialogue is in ſome places tedious. The character of Celmonde reminds us of Glenalvon in Douglas, but it is better drawn: His ſoliloquy is beautiful and characteriſtic *. The firſt chorus, or "Mynſtrelles Songe" in this piece, is a perfect

* CELMONDE.

Hope, hallie ſuſter, ſweepeynge thro' the ſkie,
In crowne of goulde, and robe of lillie whyte,
Whyche farre abrode ynne gentle ayre doe flie,
Meetynge from diſtaunce the enjoyous ſyghte,
Albeytte eſte thou takeſt thie hie flyghte
Hecket [1] ynne a myſte, and wyth thyne eyne yblente,
Nowe commeſt thou to mee wythe ſtarrie lyghte;
Ontoe thie veſte the rodde ſonne ys adente [2];
The Sommer tyde, the month of Maie appere,
Depycte wythe ſkylledd honde upponn thie wyde aamere.

I from a nete of hopelen am adawed,
Awhaped [3] atte the fetyveneſs of daie;
Ælla, bie nete moe thann hys myndbruche awed,
Is gone, and I moſte followe, toe the fraie.
Celmonde canne ne'er from anie byker ſtaie.
Dothe warre begynne? there's Clemonde yn the place.

Botte

1 Wrapped cloſely, covered. 2 faſtened. 3 aſtoniſh'd.

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perfect paſtoral. It abounds in natural and tender ſentiments, and appoſite imagery, and the fertility of the author's genius

Botte whanne the warre ys donne, I'll haſte awaie.
The reſte from nethe tymes maſque muſt ſhew yttes face.
I ſee onnombered joies arounde mee ryſe;
Blake [1] ſtondethe future doome, and joie dothe mee alyſe.

O honnoure, honnoure, whatt ys bie thee hanne?
Hailie the robber and the bordelyer,
Who kens ne thee, or ys to thee beſtanne,
And nothynge does thie myckle gaſtneſs fere.
Faygne woulde I from mie boſomme alle thee tare.
Thou there dyſperpelleſt [2] thie levynne-bronde;
Whyleſt mie ſoulgh's forwyned, thou art the gare;
Sleene ys mie comforte bie thie ferie honde;
As ſomme talle hylle, whann wynds doe ſhake the grounde,
Itte kerveth all abroade, bie braſteynge hyltren wounde.

Honnoure, whatt bee ytte? tys a ſhadowes ſhade,
A thynge of wychencref, an idle dreme;
On of the fonnis whych the clerche have made
Menne wydhoute ſprytes, and wommen for to ſleme;
Knyghtes, who efte kenne the loude dynne of the beme,
Schulde be forgarde to ſyke enfeeblynge waies,
Make everych acte, alyche theyr ſoules, be breme,
And for theyre chyvalrie alleyne have prayſe.
O thou, whatteer thie name,
Or Zabalus or Queed,
Comme, ſteel mie ſable ſpryte,
For fremde [3] and dolefulle dede.

1 Naked, 2 Scattereſt, 3 Strange.

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nius is diſplayed in this little ballad; ſince ſhort as it is, it contains a complete plot or fable *.

There

* MANNE.

Tourne thee to thie Shepſterr [1] ſwayne;
Bryghte ſonne has ne droncke the dewe
From the floures of yellowe hue;
Tourne thee, Alyce, backe agayne.

WOMANNE.

No, beſtoikerre [2], I wylle go,
Softlie tryppynge o'ere the mees [3],
Lyche the ſylver-footed doe,
Seekynge ſhelterr yn grene trees.

MANNE.

See the moſs-growne daiſey'd banke,
Pereynge ynne the ſtreme belowe;
Here we'lle ſytte, yn dewie danke;
Tourne thee, Alyce, do notte goe.

WOMANNE.

I've hearde erſte mie grandame ſaie,
Yonge damoyſelles ſchulde ne bee,
Inne the ſwotie moonthe of Maie,
Wythe yonge menne bie the grene wode tree.

MANNE.

Sytte thee, Alyce, ſytte and harke,
Howe the ouzle [4] chauntes hys noate,
The chelandree [5], greie morn larke,
Chauntynge from theyre lyttel throate;

WO-

1 Shepherd. 2 deceiver. 3 meadows. 4 The black-bird. 5 Goldfinch.

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There are extant two parts, or rather two different copies of the Battle of Haſtings. Theſe

WOMANNE.

I heare them from eche grene wode tree,
Chauntynge owte ſo blatauntlie [1],
Tellynge lecturnyes [2] to mee,
Myſcheeſe ys whanne you are nygh.

MANNE.

See alonge the mees ſo grene
Pied daiſies, kynge-coppes ſwote;
Alle wee ſee, bie non bee ſeene,
Nete botte ſhepe ſettes here a fote.

WOMANNE.

Shepſter ſwayne, you tare mie gratche [3].
Oute uponne ye! lette me goe.
Leave mee ſwythe, or I'lle alatche.
Robynne, thys youre dame ſhall knowe.

MANNE.

See! the crokynge brionie
Rounde the popler twyſte hys ſpraie;
Rounde the oake the greene ivie
Florryſchethe and Iyveth aie.

Lette us ſeate us bie thys tree,
Laughe, and ſynge to lovynge ayres;
Comme, and doe notte coyen bee;
Nature made all thynges bie payres.

Drooried

1 Loudly. 2 lectures. 3 apparel.

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Theſe appear to have been higher in the eſtimation of Chatterton, as well as of Dr. Milles, than moſt of the other productions

Drooried cattes wylle after kynde;
Gentle doves wylle kyſs and coe:

WOMANNE.

Botte manne, hee moſte bee ywrynde,
Tylle ſyr preeſte make on of two.
Tempe mee ne to the foule thynge;
I wylle no mannes lemanne be;
Tyll ſyr preeſte hys ſonge doethe ſynge,
Thou ſhalt neere fynde aught of mee.

MANNE.

Bie oure ladie her yborne,
To-morrowe, ſoone as ytte ys daie,
I'lle make thee wyfe, ne bee forſworne,
So tyde me lyfe or dethe for aie.

WOMANNE.

Whatt dothe lette, botte thatte nowe
Wee attenes[1], thos honde yn honde,
Unto diviniſtre [2] goe,
And bee lyncked yn wedlocke bonde?

MANNE.

I agree, and thus I plyghte
Honde, and harte, and all that's myne;
Good ſyr Rogerr, do us ryghte,
Make us one, at Cothbertes ſhryne.

BOTHE.

1 At once. 2 a divine.

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ductions of Rowley. When Chatterton brought the firſt part to Mr. Barret, being greatly preſſed to produce the poem in the original hand-writing, he at laſt ſaid, that he had written this poem himſelf for a friend; but that he had another, the copy of an original by Rowley: and being then deſired to produce that poem, he brought, after ſome time, to Mr. Barrett, the poem which is marked in Mr. Tyrwhit's and Dr. Milles's editions, as No. 2 *.

The firſt of theſe poems I cannot help claſſing among the moſt inferior of Rowley's. The mere detail of violence and carnage, with nothing to intereſt curioſity, or engage the more tender paſſions, can

BOTHE.

We wylle ynn a bordelle [1] lyve,
Hailie, thoughe of no eſtate;
Everyche clocke moe love ſhall gyve;
Wee ynn godeneſſe wylle bee greate.

1 A cottage.

* Introd. Account prefixed to Rowley's poems, p. 21.

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can be pleaſing to few readers. There is not a ſingle epiſode to enliven the tedious narrative, and but few of the beauties of poetry to relieve the mind from the diſguſting ſubject.

The ſecond part is far ſuperior. There is more of poetical deſcription in it, more of nature, more of character. The imagery is more animated, the incidents more varied. The character of Tancarville is well drawn, and the ſpirit of candour and humanity which pervades it, is perhaps unparalleled in any writer before the age of Shakeſpear. The whole epiſode of Gyrtha is well conducted, and the altercation between him and his brother Harold, is intereſting. But the deſcription of morning *, and that of Saliſbury plain

* And now the greie-eyd morne with vi'lets dreſt,
Shakyng the dewdrops on the flourie meedes,
Fled with her roſie radiance to the Weſt:
Forth from the Eaſterne gatte the fyerie ſteedes

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plain *, would be alone ſufficient to reſcue the whole poem from oblivion, and to entitle it to a place upon a claſſic ſhelf. The

Of the bright ſunne awaytynge ſpirits leedes:
The ſunne, in fierie pompe enthrond on hie,
Swyfter than thoughte alonge hys jernie gledes,
And ſcatters nyghtes remaynes from oute the ſkie:
He ſawe the armies make for bloudie fraie,
And ſtopt his driving ſteeds, and hid his lyghtſome raye.

* Where fruytleſs heathes and meadows cladde in greie,
Save where derne hawthornes reare theyr humble heade,
The hungrie traveller upon his waie
Sees a huge deſarte alle arounde hym ſpredde,
The diſtaunte citie ſcantlie to be ſpedde,
The curlynge force of ſmoke he ſees in vayne,
Tis too far diſtaunte, and hys onlie bedde
Iwimpled in hys cloke ys on the playne,
Whylſte rattlynge thonder forrey oer his hedde,
And raines come down to wette hys harde uncouthlie bedde.

A wondrous pyle of rugged mountaynes ſtandes,
Placd on eche other in a dreare arraie,
It ne could be the worke of human handes,
It ne was reared up bie menne of claie.
Here did the Brutons adoration paye
To the falſe god whom they did Tauran name,
Dightynge hys altarre with greete fyres in Maie,
Roaſtynge their vyctualle round aboute the flame,
'Twas here that Hengyſt did the Brytons flee,
As they were mette in council for to bee.

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The utmoſt efforts of the author, however, cannot always impart intereſt or variety to the dull catalogue of names, which have ceaſed to be remembered, and the unvaried recital of wounds and deaths. But Homer himſelf nods when engaged upon a topic ſo unfavourable to genius.

The Briſtowe Tragedy, or the Deathe of Syr Charles Bawdin, has little but its pathetic ſimplicity to recommend it. There is nothing ingenious in the plot, or ſtriking in the execution; and it only ranks upon a par with a number of tragic ballads, both ancient and modern, in the ſame ſtyle.

The eclogues are to be accounted ſome of the moſt perfect ſpecimens among the poems of Rowley. Indeed, I am not acquainted with any paſtorals ſuperior to them, either ancient or modern. The firſt of them bears a remote reſemblance to the firſt eclogue of Virgil;

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and contains a beautiful and pathetic picture of the ſtate of England, during the civil wars between the houſes of York and Lancaſter. The thoughts and images are all truly paſtoral; and it is impoſſible to read it, without experiencing thoſe lively, yet melancholy feelings, which a true delineation of nature alone can inſpire. I cannot help feeling an irreſiſtable inclination to preſent the reader with two ſtanzas, which have ever appeared to me particularly beautiful.

RAUFE.

Saie to mee nete; I kenne thie woe in myne;
O! I've a tale that Sabalus [1] mote [2] telle.
Swote [3] flouretts, mantled meedows, foreſtes dygne [4];
Gravots [5] far-kend [6] arounde the Errmiets [7] cell;
The ſwote ribible [8] dynning [9] yn the dell;
The joyous daunceynge ynn the hoaſtrie [10] courte;
Eke [11] the highe ſonge and everych joie farewell,
Farewell the verie ſhade of fayre dyſporte [12];
Impeſtering [13] trobble onn mie heade doe comme,
Ne on kynde Seyncte to warde [14] the aye [15] encreaſynge dome.

RO-

1 The Devil. 2 might. 3 ſweet. 4 good, neat, genteel: 5 groves, ſometimes uſed for a coppice. 6 far-ſeen. 7 Hermit. 8 violin. 9 ſounding. 10 inn, or public-houſe. 11 alſo. 12 pleaſure. 13 annoying. 14 to keep off. 15 ever, always.

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ROBERTE.

Oh! I coulde waile mie kynge-coppe-decked mees 16,
Mie ſpreedynge flockes of ſhepe of lillie white,
Mie tendre applynges 17, and embodyde 18 trees,
Mie Parker's Grange 19, far ſpreedynge to the ſyghte,
Mie cuyen 20 kyne 21, mie bullockes ſtringe 22 yn ſyghte.
Mie gorne 23 emblaunched 24 with the comfreie 25 plante,
Mie floure 26 Seyncte Marie ſhotteyng wyth the lyghte,
Mie ſtore of all the bleſſynges Heaven can grant.
I-ainn dureſſed 27 unto ſorrowes blowe,
Ihanten'd 28 to the peyne, will lette ne ſalte teare flowe.

16 Meadows. 17 grafted trees. 18 thick, ſtout. 19 liberty of paſture given to the Parker. 20 tender. 21 cows. 22 ſtrong. 23 garden. 24 whitened. 25 cumfrey, a favourite diſh at that time. 26 marygold. 27 hardened. 28 accuſtomed.

The ſecond eclogue is an eulogium on the actions of Richard I. in the Holy-land, which will be read with additional pleaſure by thoſe who have ſeen the ſhort but ſpirited ſketch of theſe wars in Mr. Gibbon's laſt volumes. The poem is ſuppoſed to be ſung by a young ſhepherd, whoſe father is abſent on the Holy war: and the Epode, or burthen, is happily imagined:

"Sprytes of the bleſt, and every ſeyncte ydedde,
"Pour dut your pleaſaunce on my fadre's hedde."

Before he has concluded his ſong, he is cheered by the ſight of the veſſel in which his father returns victorious.

The third paſtoral is chiefly to be admired for its excellent morality; it is, however, enlivened by a variety of appropriate imagery, and many of the ornaments of true poetry.

The laſt of theſe paſtorals, called Elinoure and Juga, is one of the fineſt pathetic tales I have ever read. The complaint of two young females lamenting their lovers ſlain in the wars of York and Lancaſter, was one of the happieſt ſubjects that could be choſen for a tragic paſtoral. Two ſtanzas of this poem, will, I flatter myſelf, amply juſtify this opinion; part of the former has been ſuppoſed, by the Anti-Rowleians, to be an imitation of a ſtanza in Mr. Gray's elegy,

"The breezy call of incenſe breathing morn, &c."

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ELINOURE.

No moe the miſkynette [1] ſhall wake the morne,
The minſtrelle daunce, good cheere, and morryce plaie;
No moe the amblynge palfrie and the horne
Shall from the leſſel [2] rouze the foxe awaie;
I'll ſeke the foreſte alle the lyve-longe daie;
Alle nete amenge the gravde chyrche [3] glebe will goe,
And to the paſſante Spryghtes lecture [4] mie tale of woe.

JU'GA.

Whan mokie [5] cloudis do hange upon the leme
Of leden [6] Moon, ynn ſylver mantels dyghte;
The tryppeynge Faeries weve the golden dreme
Of Selyneſs [7], whyche flyethe wythe the nyghte;
Thenne (botte the Seynctes forbydde!) gif to a ſpryte
Syrr Rychardes forme ys lyped, I'll holde dyſtraughte
Hys bledeynge claie-colde corſe, and die eche daie ynn thoughte.

1 A ſmall bagpipe. 2 in a confined ſenſe, a buſh or hedge, though ſometimes uſed as a foreſt. 3 church-yard. 4 relate. 5 black. 6 decreaſing. 7 happineſs.

The ballad of Charity is an imitation of the moſt beautiful and affecting of our Saviour's parables, the good Samaritan.—The poetical deſcriptions are truly pictureſque. We feel the horror of the dark, cold night; we ſee "the big drops fall," and the "full flocks driving o'er

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the plain." "The welkin opens, and the yellow light'ning flies." "The thunder's rattling ſound moves ſlowly on, and ſwelling, burſts into a violent craſh; ſhakes the high ſpire," &c. If Chatterton were really the author of this poem, he probably alluded to his own deſerted ſituation, ſince, it is ſaid, he gave it to the publiſher of the Town and Country Magazine, only a month before his death:

"Haſte to thie church-glebe houſe 1 aſhrewed 2 manne!
"Haſte to thie kiſte 3, thie only dortouſe 4 bedde.
"Cale as the claie, whiche will gre on thie hedde,
"Is charitie and love aminge 5 highe elves;
"Knights and barons live for pleaſure and themſelves."

1 The *grave*. 2 *unfortunate*. 3 *coffin*. 4 *a ſleeping room*. 5 *among*

The leſſer pieces in this collection are not without merit. There is much elegant ſatire in the two epiſtles to Canynge prefixed to Ella *; and ſome ſtrokes of pleaſantry in the "Storie of Canynge."

As

* I have ſelected the firſt of theſe epiſtles as a ſpecimen of the ſatiric powers of Rowley.

'Tys

As a complete ſpecimen of this author's abilities in Lyric compoſition, it is only neceſſary

'Tys ſonge bie mynſtrelles, thatte yn auntyent tym,
Whan Reaſonn hylt [1] herſelfe in cloudes of nyghte,
The preeſte delyvered alle the lege [2] yn rhym;
Lyche peynćted [3] tyltynge ſpeares to pleaſe the ſyghte,
The whyche yn yttes felle uſe doe make moke [4] dere [5],
Syke dyd theire auncyante lee deſtlie [6] delyghte the eare.

Perchaunce yn Vyrtues gare [7] rhym mote bee thenne,
Butte efte [8] nowe flyeth to the odher ſyde;
In hallie [9] preeſte apperes the ribaudes [10] penne,
Inne lithe [11] moncke apperęs the barronnes pryde:
But rhym wythe ſomme, as nedere [12] widhout teethe,
Make pleaſaunce to the ſenſe, botte maie do lyttel ſcathe [13].

Syr Johne, a knyghte, who hath a barne of lore [14],
Kenns [15] Latyn att fyrſt ſyghte from Frenche or Greke,
Pyghethe [16] hys knowlachynge [17] ten yeres or more,
To rynge upon the Latynne worde to ſpeke.
Whoever ſpekethe Englyſch ys deſpyſed,
The Englyſch hym to pleaſe moſte fyrſte be latynized.

Vevyan, a moncke, good a requiem [18] ſynges;
Can preache ſo wele, eche hynde [19] hys meneynge knowes;
Albeytte theſe gode guyfts awaie he ſlynges,
Beeynge as badde yn vearſe as goode yn proſe.
Hee ſynges of ſeynctes who dyed for yer Godde,
Everych wynter nyghte afreſche he ſheddes theyr blodde.

To

1 Hid, concealed. 2 law. 3 painted. 4 much. 5 hurt, damage. 6 ſweetly. 7 cauſe. 8 oft. 9 holy. 10 rake, lewd perſon. 11 humble. 12 adder. 13 hurt, damage. 14 learning. 15 knows. 16 plucks or tortures. 17 knowlędge. 18 a ſervice uſed over the dead. 19 peaſant.

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neceſſary to cite the incomparable ode or chorus.

To maydens, huſwyfes, and unlored [20] dames,
Hee redes hys tales of merryment & woe.
Loughe [21] loudie dynneth [22] from the dolte [23] adrames [24];
He ſwelles on laudes of fooles, tho' kennes [25] hem ſoe.
Sommetyme at tragedie theie laughe and ſynge,
At merrie yaped [26] fage [27] ſomme hard-drayned water brynge.

Yette Vevyan ys ne foole, beyinde [28] hys lynes.
Geofroie makes vearſe, as handycrafts theyr ware;
Wordes wythoute ſenſe fulle groffyngelye [29] he twynes,
Cotteynge hys ſtorie off as wythe a ſheere;
Waytes monthes on nothynge, & hys ſtorie donne,
Ne moe you from ytte kenn, than gyf [30] you neere begonne.

Enowe of odhers; of mieſelfe to write,
Requyrynge whatt I doe notte nowe poſſeſs,
To you I leave the taſke; I kenne your myghte
Wyll make mie faultes, mie meynte [31] of faultes, be leſs.
Ælla wythe thys I ſende, and hope that you
Wylle from ytte caſte awaie, whatte lynes maie be untrue.

Playes made from hallie [32] tales I holde unmeete;
Lette ſomme greate ſtorie of a manne be ſonge;
Whanne, as a manne, we Godde and Jeſus treate,
In mie pore mynde, we doe the Godhedde wronge.
Botte lette ne wordes, whyche [33] droorie mote ne heare,
Bee placed yn the ſame. Adieu untyll anere [34].

THOMAS ROWLEIE.

20 Unlearned. 21 laugh. 22 ſounds. 23 fooliſh. 24 churls. 25 knows. 26 laughable. 27 tale, jeſt. 28 beyond. 29 fooliſhly. 30 if. 31 many. 32 holy. 33 ſtrange perverſion of words. *Droorie* in its ancient ſignification ſtood for *modeſty*. 34 another.

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chorus in Goddwyn, a tragedy, which he has left imperfect.

CHORUS, &c.

When Freedome, dreſte yn blodde-ſteyned veſte,
To everie knyghte her warre-ſonge ſunge,
Uponne her hedde wylde wedes were ſpredde;
A gorie anlace bye her honge.
She daunced onne the heathe;
She hearde the voice of deathe;
Pale-eyned affryghte, hys harte of ſylver hue,
In vayne aſſayled [1] her boſomme to acale [2];
She hearde onflemed [3] the ſhriekinge voice of woe,
And ſadneſſe ynne the owlette ſhake the dale.
She ſhooke the burled [4] ſpeere,
On hie ſhe jeſte [5] her ſheelde,
Her foemen [6] all appere,
And flizze [7] alonge the feelde.
Power, wythe his heafod [8] ſtraught [9] ynto the ſkyes,
Hys ſpeere a ſonne-beame, and his ſheelde a ſtarre,
Alyche [10] twaie [11] brendeynge [12] gronfyres [13] rolls hys eyes,
Chaſtes [14] with hys yronne feete and ſoundes to war.
She ſyttes upon a rocke,
She bendes before hys ſpeere,
She ryſes from the ſhocke,
Wielding her owne in ayre.
Harde as the thonder dothe ſhe drive ytte on,
Wytte ſcillye [15] wympled [16] gies [17] ytte to his crowne,
Hys

1 Endeavoured. 2 freeze. 3 undiſmayed. 4 armed, pointed. 5 hoiſted on high, raiſed. 6 foes, enemies. 7 fly. 8 head. 9 ſtretched. 10 like. 11 two. 12 flaming. 13 meteors. 14 beats, ſtamps. 15 cloſely. 16 mantled, covered. 17 guides.

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Hys longe ſharpe ſpere, hys ſpreddynge ſheelde is gon,
He falles, and fallynge rolleth thouſandes down.
War, goare-faced war, bie envie burld [18], arift [19],
Hys feerie heaulme [20] noddynge to the ayre,
Tenne bloddie arrowes ynne hys ſtreynynge fyſte—
* * * * * * * *

18 Armed. 19 aroſe. 20 helmet.

The poems of Rowley had not been long made public before their authenticity underwent a ſevere ſcrutiny; and a number of gentlemen converſant in antiquities, declared, that they could not be the productions of the fifteenth century, and openly pronounced them the forgeries of Chatterton. Their authenticity was defended by other perſons of no inconſiderable note in the literary world. The controverſy ſoon became voluminous; and the reader will not be inclined to conſider it as unimportant, when on one ſide the names of Walpole, Tyrwhitt, Warton*, Croft,

* I have been well informed that both Mr. Warton and Mr. Tyrwhit were formerly of ſentiments directly oppoſite to thoſe which they profeſs in their publications; if the poems therefore be forgeries of Chatterton, theſe gentlemen were at leaſt among the firſt on whom he impoſed.

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Croft, and Malone, are mentioned: and on the other, thoſe of Milles and Bryant; and I think I may venture to add, that of Mr. Matthias, though his candour and modeſty, almoſt exempt him from being conſidered as a partizan.

I ſhall endeavour to exhibit a ſhort ſketch of the arguments on both ſides of the queſtion, and ſhall leave my readers to form their own concluſions.

The evidence on this ſubject naturally divides itſelf into two branches, external and internal: of the former, there is little ſatisfactory to be obtained; and it muſt be confeſſed, that the bulk of the external evidence is rather againſt that party which denies the authenticity of the poems. There are, however, a few facts on that ſide of the queſtion, which are of too much conſequence to be diſregarded.

ARGU-

ARGUMENTS AGAINST the AUTHENTICITY of ROWLEY'S POEMS.

External Evidence.

I. The firſt ſerious objection which occurs againſt the authenticity of the poems, is, that Chatterton never could be prevailed upon to produce more than four of the originals, and theſe extremely ſhort, the whole not containing more than 124 verſes *. Had ſuch a treaſure of ancient poetry fallen into the hands of a young and ingenuous perſon, would he, it is ſaid, have cautiouſly produced them to the world one by one? Would he not rather have been proud of his good fortune? Would not the communicativeneſs of youth have induced him to blaze the diſcovery abroad, and to call every lover of poetry and antiquity, to a participation of the pleaſure?

* Tyrwhitt's Vindication, p. 133.

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pleaſure? Would not the hope and offers of reward at leaſt have prevented his deſtroying what, if preſerved, would certainly be productive of profit, but the deſtruction of which could anſwer no purpoſe whatever *?

II. The deficiency of proof in favour of Rowley, is ſtrongly aided by the very probable proofs in favour of Chatterton. His abilities were in every reſpect calculated for ſuch a deception. He had been in the habit of writing verſes from his earlieſt youth, and produced ſome excellent poetry. He was known to have been converſant with our old Engliſh poets and hiſtorians, particularly Chaucer. His fondneſs for heraldry, introduced many books of antiquities to his notice; and even

* An examination, &c. p. 9. Tyrwhitt's Vindication, p. 155. See alſo ſome excellent remarks to the ſame purpoſe, by the late Mr. Badcock, Monthly Review for May, 1782.

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even his profeſſion diſpoſed him to theſe ſtudies, and enabled him with facility to imitate ancient writings. In *the Chriſtmas games*, which are acknowledged to be his own, there is much of that peculiar learning in Britiſh antiquities, which was neceſſary to lay the foundation of Rowley's poems; and in his Eſſay on Sculpture, there is much of the ſame general information with which thoſe compoſitions abound *. The tranſport and delight,

* In the ſupplement to the works of Chatterton, (printed for Becket, 1784,) there is inſerted a piece which has been already referred to, called Chatterton's will. This appears to have been written a few days before he left Briſtol to go to London; when in conſequence, as it ſhould ſeem, of his being refuſed a ſmall ſum of money by a gentleman, whom he had occaſionally complimented in his poems, he had taken a reſolution of deſtroying himſelf the next day. What prevented him from carrying this deſign at that time into execution does not appear; but the whole writing on this occaſion is worth attention, as it throws much light on his real character, his acquaintance with old Engliſh writers, and his capability of underſtanding and imitating old French and Latin inſcriptions, not indeed gramatically, but ſufficient to anſwer the purpoſes to

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light, which Chatterton always diſcovered on reading the poems to Mr. Smith, his ſiſter, and his different friends, could not, it is ſaid, have reſulted from the mere pleaſure of a diſcovery: it was the ſecret, but ardent feeling of his own abilities, and the conſciouſneſs that the praiſes which were beſtowed upon them were all his own, which filled him with exultation, and

to which he often applied this knowledge. From this writing it alſo appears that he would not allow King David to have been a holy man, from the ſtrains of piety and devotion in his pſalms, becauſe a *great genius can effect any thing*; that is, *aſſume* any *character* and *mode* of *writing* he pleaſes. This is an anſwer from Chatterton himſelf, to one argument, and a very powerful one, in ſupport of the authenticity of Rowley's poems. In that part of the will addreſſed to Mr. George Catcot, Chatterton mentions Rowley's poems, but in ſo guarded a manner, that it is not eaſy to draw any certain information for or againſt their authenticity; though the parties on both ſides have attempted it. The addreſs to Mr. Barrett does no leſs credit to his own feelings, than to that gentleman's treatment of him; and the apology that follows to the two Mr. Catcotts, for ſome effuſions of his ſatire upon them, is the beſt recompence he then had in his power to make to thoſe gentlemen, from whom he had experienced much civility and kindneſs. O.

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and produced thoſe ſtrong emotions, which even his habitual reſerve on this ſubject was unable to conceal *.

III. The declaration of Chatterton to Mr. Barrett, concerning the firſt part of the Battle of Haſtings, which he confeſſed *he had written himſelf*, is a preſumption againſt the reſt. He was then taken by ſurprize, but at other times preſerved a degree of conſiſtency in his falſehood.

IV. Mr. Ruddall, an intimate acquaintance of Chatterton, declared to Mr. Croft, that he ſaw him (Chatterton) diſguiſe ſeveral pieces of parchment with the appearances of age, and that Chatterton told him, that the parchment which Mr. Ruddall had aſſiſted him in blacking and diſguiſing, was the very parchment he had ſent to the printer's, containing

* Monthly Review for March 1782.

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taining "the account of the Fryers paſſing the old bridge *."

V. The

* "To GEORGE STEEVENS, Eſq. Hampſtead Heath.

"DEAR SIR,

"IT gives me pleaſure that LOVE AND MADNESS, which I put together in a few idle hours, as much for the ſake of doing juſtice to poor Chatterton as of blunting the edge of Hackman's ſhocking example, has ſo well anſwered the former purpoſe.

"————, Where'er (his bones at reſte)
"His ſpryte to haunte delyghteth beſte,"

Chatterton muſt be now not a little gratified when he looks down upon the ſquabbles he has raiſed on earth. Every ſyllable which I have made Hackman relate of him in LOVE AND MADNESS is, I firmly believe, religiouſly true. Walmſly was my tenant for the houſe in Shoreditch, where Chatterton lodged with him, at the time he gave me the information contained in my book. Chatterton's letters which I printed, and which are hardly leſs ſingular perhaps than Rowley's poems, are confeſſedly original.

"As I cannot ſpare time from my profeſſion to enter any further into this diſpute, and as you inform me that Mr. Warton is going to publiſh ſomething, I write this letter, according to your deſire, in anſwer to your's of yeſterday, reſpecting what long ſince I ſaid to you of Mr. Ruddall; and it is perfectly at Mr. Warton's ſervice. But I muſt deſire he will print it exactly as I ſend it you. When I have ſpoken for myſelf, he may draw his own arguments from my communication.

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V. The Rev. Mr. Catcott, brother to the Mr. Catcott before mentioned, affirmed,

"The left hand column is an extract from Dean Milles's quarto edition of Rowley's, i. e. of Chatterton's poems, p. 436, 7. The right hand column is my account of the same business. In some material circumstances he certainly errs. It were easy to shew, the Dean has condemned Chatterton, and robbed him of Rowley's poems upon slighter evidence of less material mistakes.

"That the Dean should have received *all* his information of this business from Mr. Ruddall, is certainly impossible, because some part of his account of it is certainly untrue. The passages in the Dean's account, on which I comment, are marked, that they may be printed in Italics.

"A *singular* circumstance relating to the history of this ceremony ("of passing the "old bridge") *has been communicated to the Publick within these two last years*; and candour requires that it should not pass unnoticed here, especially as the character of the relator leaves no room for suspicion. The objectors to the authenticity of these poems may possibly triumph in the discovery of a fact, which contains, in their opinion, a decisive proof that Chatterton

The circumstance is singular, and I have always thought so; but it has never yet, I believe, been *communicated to the Publick*; though I certainly meant it should some time or other.

It

firmed, that having had a converſation one evening with Chatterton, he traced the very

Chatterton was the author of this paper, and (as they would infer) of all the poetry which he produced under Rowley's name; but, *when the circumſtances are attentively examined*, the reader will probably find, that even this fact tends rather to eſtabliſh, than to invalidate, the authenticity of the poems.

Mr. John Ruddall, a native and inhabitant of Briſtol, and formerly apprentice to Mr. Francis Greſley, an apothecary in that city, was well acquainted with Chatterton, whilſt he was apprentice to Mr. Lambert. During that time, Chatterton frequently called upon him at his maſter's houſe, and, *ſoon after he had printed this account of the Bridge* in the Briſtol paper, *told Mr. Ruddall, that he was the author of it; but, it occuring to him afterwards, that he might be called upon to produce the original, he brought*

It is not clear to me, that the advocates for Chatterton have occaſion to be apprehenſive, *if the circumſtances ſhould be attentively examined* even according to the Dean's own ſhewing. But mine is ſomewhat different.

very ſubſtance of this converſation, in a piece which that indefatigable genius produced ſometime after as Rowley's.

VI. Chat-

to him one day a piece of Parchment, about the ſize of a half Sheet of Fool's-Cap paper; Mr. Ruddall does not think that any thing was written on it when produced by Chatterton, but he ſaw him write ſeveral Words, if not lines, in a Character which Mr. Ruddall did not underſtand, which he ſays was totally unlike Engliſh, and, as he apprehended, was meant by Chatterton, to imitate or repreſent the original from which this Account was printed. He cannot determine preciſely how much Chatterton wrote in this manner, but ſays, that the time he ſpent in that Viſit did not exceed three quarters of an hour; the Size of the Parchment, however, (even ſuppoſing it to have been filled with writing) will in ſome meaſure aſcertain the quantity which it contained.

My viſit to Briſtol of a few days, in order to collect information concerning Chatterton, was on the 23d of July, 1778. At that time I gave ſomething to the Mother and Siſter for their voluntary communications to me. After I publiſhed LOVE AND MADNESS, I laid a larger plan for their benefit, which I hope ſtill to ſee carried into execution; and I deſtined ſomething more to the family of him whoſe genius I ſo much reſpected, though I well knew his family deemed me their enemy for endeavouring to prove him guilty of Forgery. Prevented from going to Bath, and conſequently from giving what I had ſet apart for this purpoſe, with my own Hands, I gladly ſeized the liberty allowed me by a friend of Mr. Ruddall to beg this favour of him. On the

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VI. Chatterton at firſt exhibited the Songe to Ella in his own hand-writing; and afterwards in the parchment, which he gave

the 22d of March, 1781, I wrote to Mr. Ruddall, to whom I was then a perfect ſtranger, making uſe of his Friend's name, and enclosing a Draught to him or his order for ten pounds, requeſting he would give the Money to Chatterton's Mother and Siſter. On the 30th of the ſame Month, Mr. Ruddall called upon me in Lincoln's Inn; appeared, as I imagined, to lean to the ſide of this queſtion which I have ever thought to be the right; and told me, of his own accord, what certainly agrees no more with the Dean's account, than what I have already related agrees with the Dean's ſaying that Mr. Ruddall told this, *in* 1779, *on the proſpect of procuring a gratuity of ten Pounds for Chatterton's Mother, from a Gentleman who came to Briſ-*

gave to Mr. Barrett as the original, there were found feveral variations, which it is fuppoſed

He ſays alſo, that *when Chatterton had written on the Parchment, he held it over the Candle, to give it the appearance of antiquity, which changed the Colour of the Ink, and made the Parchment appear black and a little contracted: he never ſaw him make any ſimilar attempt, nor was the Parchment produced afterwards by Chatterton to him, or (as far as he knows) to any other perſon. From a perfect knowledge of Chatterton's abilities, he thinks him to have been incapable of writing the Battle of Haſtings, or any of thoſe Poems produced by him under the name of Rowley*, nor does he remember that Chatterton ever mentioned Rowley's Poems to him, either as original or the contrary; but ſometimes (though very rarely) intimated *tol in order to collect information concerning the Son's Hiſtory.*

If my Memory not only fails me now, but failed me the ſame day, and has failed me ever ſince, Mr. Ruddall will correct me. To him I appeal, and by him I muſt ſubmit to be corrected. But, on the 30th of March, 1781, he told me, AS I THINK, that *he aſſiſted Chatterton in diſguiſing* SEVERAL *pieces of Parchment with the appearances of Age, juſt before "the "Account of paſſing the "Bridge" appeared in Farley's Journal; that, after they had made ſeveral experiments, Chatterton ſaid, "this will "do, now I will black* THE *"Parchment;" that, whether he told him at the time what* THE *Parchment was, he could not remember; that he believed he did not ſee Chatterton black* THE *Parchment, but that Chatterton told him, after*

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ſuppoſed he had admitted through forgetfulneſs, or perhaps, as actual corrections, conſidering

mated that he was poſſeſſed of ſome valuable literary productions. *Mr. Ruddall had promiſed Chatterton not to reveal this Secret, and he ſcrupulouſly kept his word till the year* 1779; *but,* ON THE PROSPECT OF PROCURING A GRATUITY OF TEN POUNDS, FOR CHATTERTON'S MOTHER, FROM A GENTLEMAN WHO CAME TO BRISTOL IN ORDER TO COLLECT INFORMATION CONCERNING HER SON'S HISTORY, he thought ſo material a benefit to the Family would fully juſtify him for divulging a ſecret by which no perſon now living could be a ſufferer."

after "the Account of paſſing the Bridge" had appeared in the News-paper, that THE *Parchment which he had blacked and diſguiſed, after their experiments, was what he had ſent to the Printer containing the* ACCOUNT."

"As this appeared to me the moſt deciſive evidence, I aſked Mr. Ruddall's leave to make uſe of his name about it, which he granted me; and I made a Memorandum of it, the ſame day, at the diſtance of a few hours. But it is ſtill poſſible my Memory might deceive me. In matters more ſerious than the authenticity of Poems, which are certainly

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conſidering that the parchment was the copy which probably would be reſorted to as a ſtandard *.

VII. The

certainly exquiſite, whoever wrote them, it is not my way, I hope, to be more poſitive than I ought.

"Mr. Ruddall will excuſe me if I ſay, that I cannot poſſibly allow him, or any one, to determine the authenticity of the Poems, by telling the Dean, or the world, that, "*from a perfect knowledge of Chatterton's abilities*, HE "thinks him to have been incapable of writing the Battle of "Haſtings, or any of thoſe Poems produced by him under "the name of Rowley."

"It appears to me that I cannot poſſibly, all this time, have been noticing what does not relate to me, becauſe Chatterton's Siſter, when ſhe thanks me in a Letter dated April the 20th, 1781, for what I ſent her and her Mother, through Mr. Ruddall, ſays, that "the only benefits they "have reaped from *the labours of her dear Brother*," are what they have received from me.

"Convey this to Mr. Warton, if you chooſe it, with many thanks for the pleaſure I have received from his Hiſtory of Engliſh Poetry; and believe me to be,

"Dear Sir,

"Your obliged friend,

Lincolns-inn,
Feb. 5, 1782.

"HERBERT CROFT, jun."

* Curſory Obſervations on Rowley's poems, p. 44.

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VII. The hand-writing of the fragment containing the ſtorie of W. Canynge, is quite different from the hand-writing of that which contains "the accounte of W. Canyinge's feaſt;" and neither of them is written in the uſual record hand of the age to which they are attributed. Indeed, in the "accounte of W. Canynge's Feaſte," the Arabian numerals, (63) are ſaid to be perfectly modern, totally different from the figures uſed in the fifteenth century, and exactly ſuch as Chatterton himſelf was accuſtomed to make *.

VIII. The very exiſtence of any ſuch perſon as ROWLEY is queſtioned, and upon apparently good ground. He is not ſo much as noticed by William of Worceſtre, who lived nearly about the ſuppoſed time of Rowley, was himſelf of Briſtol, and makes frequent

* See Milles's Rowley, p. 429. Tyrwhitt's Vindication, p. 135 Monthly Review, by Badcock, for March 1782.

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frequent mention of Canynge. "Bale, who lived two hundred years nearer to Rowley than we, and who, by unwearried induſtry, dug a thouſand bad authors out of obſcurity," has never taken the leaſt notice of ſuch a perſon *; nor yet Leland, Pitts, or Tanner, nor indeed any other literary biographer. That no copies of any of his works ſhould exiſt, but thoſe depoſited in Redcliffe church, is alſo an unaccountable circumſtance not eaſy to be ſurmounted †.

IX. Objections are even made to the manner in which the poems are ſaid to have been preſerved. That title deeds relating to the church or even hiſtorical records might be lodged in the muniment room of Redcliffe church, is allowed to be ſufficiently probable; but that *poems* ſhould have been conſigned to a cheſt

* Walpole's two letters, p. 31.
† Tyrwhitt's Vindication, p. 119, 121.

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cheſt with ſix keys, kept in a private room in a church with title deeds and conveyances, and that theſe keys ſhould be intruſted, not to the heads of a college, or any literary ſociety, but to aldermen and church-wardens, is a ſuppoſition replete with abſurdity; and the improbability is increaſed, when we conſider that theſe very papers paſſed through the hands of perſons of ſome literature, of Chatterton's father in particular, who had a taſte for poetry, and yet without the leaſt diſcovery of their intrinſic value *.

Internal Evidence.

I. In point of STYLE, COMPOSITION, and SENTIMENT, it is urged by Mr. Warton, and thoſe who adopt the ſame ſide of the controverſy, that the poems of Rowley are infinitely ſuperior to every other production of the century, which is ſaid

* See Monthly Review for March 1782.

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ſaid to have produced them. Our ancient poets are minute and particular, they do not deal in abſtraction and general exhibition, but dwell on realities; but the writer of theſe poems adopts ideal terms and artificial modes of explaining a fact, and employs too frequently the aid of metaphor and perſonification *. Our ancient bards abound in unnatural conceptions, ſtrange imaginations, and even the moſt ridiculous inconſiſtencies; but Rowley's poems preſent us with no incongruous combinations, no mixture of manners, inſtitutions, uſages and characters: they contain no violent or groſs improprieties †. One of the ſtriking characteriſtics of old Engliſh poetry, is a continued tenor of diſparity. In Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate, elegant deſcriptions, ornamental images, &c. bear no proportion

* Matthias's Eſſay on Evid, p. 64

† Warton's Inquiry, p. 21.

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proportion to pages of languor, mediocrity, proſaic and unintereſting details; but the poems in queſtion are uniformly ſupported, and are throughout poetical and animated *. Poetry, like other ſciences (ſay theſe critics) has its gradual acceſſions and advancements; and the poems in queſtion poſſeſs all that elegance, firmneſs of contexture, ſtrength and brilliancy, which did not appear in our poetry before the middle of the preſent century.

II. There appears in theſe poems none of that LEARNING, which peculiarly marks all the compoſitions of the fifteenth century. Our old poets are perpetually confounding Gothic and claſſical alluſions; Ovid and St. Auſtin are ſometimes cited in the ſame line. A ſtudious eccleſiaſtic of that period would give us a variety of uſeleſs authorities from

* Ibid. p. 20; Monthly Review, May 1782.

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from Ariſtotle, from Boethius, and from the Fathers: and the whole would be interſperſed with alluſions to another kind of reading, viz. the old romances; the round table, with Sir Launcelott, and Sir Triſtram, and Charlemagne, would have been conſtantly cited *. Poems from ſuch an author, would alſo have occaſionally exhibited prolix devotional epiſodes, mingled with texts of Scripture, and addreſſes to the Saints and bleſſed Virgin; inſtead of apoſtrophes to ſuch allegorical divinities as Truth and Content, and others of Pagan original †.

As to the hiſtorical alluſions which are really found in theſe poems, it is aſſerted, that they are only ſuch as might be ſupplied by books which are eaſily obtained, ſuch as Hollingſhead and Fox, Fuller's church hiſtory, Geofry of Monmouth, and others

* Warton's Inquiry, 21, 97, 99.
† Ibid 98.

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others of a ſimilar nature *; and that general reading has been miſtaken for profound erudition †.

II. Some ANACHRONISMS have alſo been pointed out in the manuſcripts of Rowley. Thus the art of *knitting ſtockings* is alluded to in the Tragedy of Ella ‡; whereas it is a well eſtabliſhed fact,

* Matthias's Eſſay, p. 69. An Examination of Rowley's Poems, p. 24.

† Warton's Inquiry.

‡ As Elynour bie the green leſſelle was ſyttynge,
As from the ſones hete ſhe harried,
She ſayde, as herr whytte hondes whyte hoſen was knyttynge,
Whatte pleaſure ytt ys to be married!

Mie huſbande, Lorde Thomas, a forreſter boulde,
As ever clove pynne, or the baſkette,
Does no cheryſauncys from Elynour houlde,
I have ytte as ſoone as I aſke ytte.

Whann I lyved wyth mie fadre yn merrie Clowd-dell,
Tho' twas at my liefe to mynde ſpynnynge,
I ſtylle wanted ſomethynge, botte whatte ne coulde telle,
Mie lorde fadres barbde haulle han ne wynnynge.

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fact, that the art was utterly unknown in the reign of Edward IV. Briſtol is called a city, though it was not ſuch till long after the death of that monarch. Canynge is ſaid to have poſſeſſed a *cabinet* of coins, *drawings*, &c. though theſe words were not then in uſe; and *manuſcripts* are ſpoken of as rarities, at a time when there were ſcarcely any other books: when, in truth, a printed book muſt have been a much greater curioſity *.

IV. The

Eche monynge I ryſe, doe I ſette mie maydennes,
Somme to ſpynn, ſomme to curdell, ſomme bleachynge,
Gyff any new entered doe aſke for mie aidens,
Thann ſwythynne you fynde mee a teachynge.

Lorde Walterre, mie fadre, he loved me welle,
And nothynge unto mee was nedeyngè,
Botte ſchulde I agen goe to merrie Cloud-dell,
In ſothen twoulde bee wythoute redeynge.

Shee ſayde, and lorde Thomas came over the lea,
As hee the fatte derkynnes wae chacynge,
Shee putte uppe her knyttynge, and to hym wente ſhee;
So wee leave hem bothe kyndelie embracynge.

* Curſory Obſervations on Rowley's poems, p. 22—25.

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IV. The METRE of the old Engliſh poetry, is ſaid to be totally different from that of Rowley. The ſtanza in which the majority of theſe poems are written, conſiſts of ten lines, the two firſt quatrains of which rhyme alternately, and it cloſes with an alexandrine; no example of which occurs in Chaucer, Lydgate or Gower. Spencer extended the old octavo ſtanza to nine lines, cloſing with an alexandrine, to which Prior added a tenth *. Above all, the extraordinary inſtance of an Engliſh Pindaric in the fifteenth century, is ridiculed by Mr. Warton, which novelty (he ſays) "was reſerved for the capricious ambition of Cowley's muſe." That Rowley ſhould ever have ſeen the original model of this irregular ſtyle of compoſition, is utterly improbable, ſince

* Matthias's Eſſay, p. 66.

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Pindar was one of the laſt claſſics that emerged at the reſtoration of literature *.

To this head may be refered the extraordinary *ſmoothneſs of the verſe*, which is utterly unparalleled in any poet for more than a century after the ſuppoſed age of Rowley †; the accent or cadence, which is always modern; and the perfection and harmony of the rhyme ‡.

V. While the compoſition, metre, &c. are wholly modern, the LANGUAGE is aſſerted to be too ancient for the date of the poems. It is not the language of any particular period, but of two entire centuries §. The diction and verſification are at perpetual variance ||. The author appears to have borrowed all his ancient language, not from the uſage of common life,

* Warton's Inquiry, p. 33, 39.
† Curſory Obſervations, p. 5.
‡ Matthias's Eſſay, p. 67.
§ Curſory Obſervations, p. 32.
|| Warton's Inquiry, p. 42.

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life, but from Speght, Skinner, and other lexicographers, and to have copied their miſtakes *. He has even introduced words which never made a part of the Engliſh language, and which are evidently the coinage of fancy, analogy, or miſtake †.

VI. Notwithſtanding this affectation of ancient language, it is added, that the tinſel of MODERN PHRASEOLOGY may in too many inſtances be detected. Thus ſuch phraſes as "*Puerilitie*; *before* his *optics*; *blameleſs* tongue; the auchoure of the *piece*; veſſel wreckt upon the *tragic* ſand; the *pro-to-ſleyne* man," &c. could not be the language of the fifteenth century. We find alſo a number of modern formularies and combinations, e. g. "Syſters in ſorrow; poygnant arrowes *typp'd* with deſtinie; Oh, Goddes!

* Matthias's Eſſay, p. 68. Tyrwhitt's Appendix to Rowley's Poems, and Vindication paſſim.

† Ibid.

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Now by the Goddes; Ah, what avaulde; Awaie, awaie! (which is the cant of modern tragedy) Oh, thou, whate'er thie name;" with a number of compound epithets *, and other almoſt certain marks of modern compoſition †.

VIII. To theſe may be added ſome paſſages which appear to be imitations of modern poets. Many of thoſe, which have been cited to convict Chatterton of plagiariſm, are, it muſt be confeſſed, ſuch obvious thoughts, that they might be adopted by a perſon who had never ſeen the modern publications in which they appear; but ſuch coincidences as the following are palpable:

"O! for a muſe of fire!"	Shakeſ. Hen. V.
"O ſorre a ſpryte al feere!"	Ella, l. 729.
"His beard all white as ſnow.	
"All flaxen was his pole."	Hamlet.

"Black

* Warton's Inquiry, p. 23, 24.
† Curſory Obſervations, p. 12, 13.

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" Black his cryne as the winter nyghte,
" White his rode, as the ſommer ſnowe." Ella, l. 851.

" No, no, he is dead,
" Gone to his death bed." Hamlet.

" Mie love is dedde,
" Gone to his deathe-bedde." Ella, l. 855.

" Unhouſell'd, unanointed, *unaknell'd*,"
Hamlet in Pope's edit.
" Unburled, undelievre, uneſpryte." Goddwyn, l. 27.
" Their ſouls from corpſes *unaknell'd* depart."
Bat. of Haſt. part 1, l. 288.

" The grey-gooſe wing that was thereon,
" In his hearts-blood was wet." Chevy-Chace.

" The *grey-gooſe* pynion, that *thereon* was ſett,
" Eftſoons wyth ſmokyng *crimſon bloud was wett*."
Bat. of Haſt. part 1, l. 200.

With ſuch a force and vehement might
He did his body gore,
The ſpear went thro' the other ſide
A large *cloth-yard* and *more*, Chevy-Chace.

With thilk a force it *did his body gore,*
That in his tender guts it entered,
In veritie, a full *cloth-yard or more*. Bat. of Haſt *.

" Clos'd his eyes in endleſs night." Gray's bard.
" He clos'd his eyne in everlaſtynge nyghte."
Bat. of Haſt. part 2. l. 278 †.

* See Monthly Review.
† See a letter prefixed to Chatterton's Miſcellanies, p. 24.

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The advocates of Rowley, are, however, not deſtitute of arguments in their ſupport; I ſhall therefore divide the evidence in the ſame manner as in ſtating the former, and endeavour to exhibit as fair a ſummary as poſſible.

ARGUMENTS TO PROVE THAT THE POEMS ATTRIBUTED TO ROWLEY, WERE REALLY WRITTEN BY HIM AND OTHERS IN THE 15th CENTURY.

External Evidence.

I. The firſt grand argument which the advocates on this ſide advance, is the conſtant and uniform aſſertion (except in a ſingle inſtance) of Chatterton himſelf, who is repreſented by his ſiſter, and all his intimates, as a lover of truth from the earlieſt dawn of reaſon. He was alſo moſt inſatiable of fame, and abounded in vanity. He felt himſelf neglected, and many paſ-

ſages

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ſages of his writings are full of invective on this ſubject. Is it probable, that ſuch a perſon ſhould barter the fair character of truth, which he loved, for the ſake of perſiſting in falſehood, which he deteſted? Is it probable, that a perſon of his conſummate vanity, ſhould uniformly give the honour of all his more excellent compoſitions to another, and only inſcribe his name to thoſe which were evidently inferior? But even though a man might be thus careleſs of his reputation during his life time, under the conviction that he might aſſume the honour whenever he pleaſed, would this careleſsneſs continue even at the hour of death? Would he at a moment, when he actually meditated his own deſtruction; in a paper which he inſcribes—"All this wrote between 11 and 2 o'clock Saturday (Evening), in the utmoſt diſtreſs of mind,"—ſtill repeat with the utmoſt ſolemnity the ſame falſe aſſertion

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assertion that he had affirmed during the former part of his life? there was at least *no occasion* to introduce the subject at that time, and he might have been silent, if he did not chuse to close his existence with a direct falsehood *. If we consider the joy which he manifested on the discovery of the parchments, the avidity with which he read them, he must be the most complete of dissemblers, if really they contained no such treasure as he pretended. To another very extraordinary circumstance Mr. Catcott has pledged himself, which is, that on his first acquaintance with Chatterton, the latter mentioned by *name* almost all the poems which have since appeared in print, and that at a time, when, if he were the author, one-tenth of them could not be written †.

II. Next

* See Chatterton's will, Appendix to Miscellanies. See also the learned Mr. Bryant's Observations, p. 499, 547.

† Ibid. 548.

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II. Next to the aſſeverations of Chatterton himſelf, we are bound to pay at leaſt ſome attention to thoſe of all his friends. His mother accurately remembers the whole tranſaction concerning the parchments, as I have already ſtated it. His ſiſter alſo recollects to have ſeen the original parchment of the poem on our Lady's Church, and, ſhe thinks, of the Battle of Haſtings: ſhe remembers to have heard her brother mention frequently the names of Turgot, and of John Stowe, beſides that of Rowley. *Mr. Smith, who was one of the moſt intimate friends of Chatterton, remembers to have ſeen manuſcripts upon vellum, to the number of a dozen in his poſſeſſion, many of them ornamented with the heads of kings or of popes, and ſome of them as broad as the bottom of a large ſized chair †. He uſed

* Milles's Preliminary Diſſertation, p. 8.
† Bryant's Obſervations, p. 528.

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uſed frequently to read to Mr. Smith, ſometimes parts, and ſometimes whole treatiſes from theſe old manuſcripts; and Mr. Smith has very often been preſent while he tranſcribed them at Mr. Lambert's *. Mr. Capel, a jeweller, at Briſtol, aſſured Mr. Bryant, that he had frequently called upon Chatterton, while at Mr. Lambert's, and had at times found him tranſcribing ancient manuſcripts anſwering to the former deſcription †. Mr. Thiſtlethwaite, in the curious letter already quoted, relates, that during the year 1768, "at divers viſits, he found Chatterton employed in copying Rowley from what he ſtill conſiders as undoubted originals ‡." Mr. Carey alſo, another intimate acquaintance, frequently heard Chatterton mention theſe manuſcripts ſoon after he left Colſton's ſchool. Every one

* Bryant's Obſervations.
† Ibid, p. 523.
‡ Milles's Rowley, p. 457.

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one of theſe gentlemen, as well as Mr. Clayfield and Mr. Ruddall, declare unequivocally, from an intimate knowledge of Chatterton's learning and abilities, that they believe him incapable of producing the poems of Rowley.

III. That a number of manuſcripts were found in Redcliffe church, cannot poſſibly be doubted after the variety of evidence which has been adduced to that purpoſe. Perrot, the old Sexton, who ſucceeded Chatterton's great uncle, took Mr. Shiercliffe, a miniature painter, of Briſtol, as early as the year 1749, through Redcliffe church; he ſhewed him in the North porch a number of parchments, ſome looſe and ſome tied up, and intimated, "that there were things there, which would one day be better known; and that in proper hands, they might prove a treaſure *." Many of the manuſcripts

* Bryant's Obſervations, p. 513.

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nuſcripts in Mr. Barrett's hands bear all the marks of age, and are "ſigned by Rowley himſelf. The characters in each inſtance appear to be ſimilar; and the hand-writing the ſame in all *."

IV. The ſhort time which Chatterton had to produce all theſe poems, is an extraordinary circumſtance. It has been already ſtated, that he continued at Coulſton's ſchool from the age of eight till that of fourteen and ſeven months: that he continued each day in ſchool from ſeven or eight o'clock till twelve in the morning, and from one till four or five in the evening, and went to bed at eight. There is alſo reaſon to believe, that he did

Bryant's Obſervations p. 548. Mr. Barrett, and he only, has it in his power finally to determine the controverſy concerning Rowley's poems. Let him produce all the manuſcripts which he obtained from Chatterton, and let them be put into the hands of ſome perſons converſant in old writings, who may poſſibly be able to decide concerning the probable date of the hand-writing. O.

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to produce imitation than to copy these poems

did not discover or begin to copy these poems, or even to apply himself to antiquities, before the age of fifteen. In about the space therefore of two years and a half, he made himself master of the ancient language of this country; he produced more than two volumes of poetry, which are published, and about as many compositions, in prose and verse, as would nearly fill two volumes more. During this time he must have read a considerable variety of books. He was studying medicine, heraldry, and other sciences; he was practicing drawing; he copied a large book of precedents; and Mr. Lambert's business, though not extensive, must have occupied at least some part of his attention. Which, therefore, is the easier supposition, say the advocates for Rowley, that this almost miracle of industry or ability was performed by a boy; or

that

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that Chatterton really copied the poems from ancient documents *?

V. Chat-

* Of these old writings, which he is supposed to have transcribed from obscure and almost illegible manuscripts, (exclusive of his miscellaneous and political writings,) the poetical alone fills 288 octavo pages in Mr. Tywrhitt's edition; and perhaps there are others, with a quantity of prose writings which might fill another such volume. See Milles's edition, p. 438.

These must have been transcribed by him, either in Mr. Lambert's office, or during the few hours he spent at home with his mother in an evening. Neither Mr. Lambert nor his mother or sister, take upon them to say, that they ever saw him this way employed. When not engaged in the immediate business of his profession, he was employed by his master to copy forms and precedents, as well to improve him in the law as to keep him employed. Of these law forms and precedents, Mr. Lambert has in his possession a folio book containing 334 pages, closely written by Chatterton; also 36 pages in another. In the noting book, 36 notarial acts; and in the letter book, 38 letters copied.

Add to all this his *own* acknowledged compositions, filling 240 pages in the printed copy, and perhaps as many more in manuscript not yet published.

The greatest part of these compositions, both under Rowley's name and his own, was written before he went to London, in April 1770, he being then aged 17 years and five months; and of the former, Rowley's pieces, they were almost all exhibited a twelve month earlier, before April 1769.

Now

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V. Chatterton is ſaid further to have diſcovered great marks of ignorance on the manuſcripts coming firſt into his poſſeſſion. He read the name *Roulie* inſtead of Rowley, till he was ſet right by Mr. Barrett *. In the acknowledged writings of Chatterton, there are alſo palpable miſtakes, and marks of ignorance in hiſtory, geography, &c.; whereas no ſuch appear in the poems of Rowley †. But what is of ſtill greater conſequence, Mr. Bryant has laboured to prove, that in almoſt innumerable inſtances, Chatterton did not underſtand the language of Rowley, but that he has actually

P

Now the time taken up in preparing the parchment and imitating the old writing, muſt probably have been greater than the time ſpent in compoſing them. If he was in poſſeſſion of the originals, ſurely he would not have beſtowed all this time and pains in tranſcribing from originals, which he might have parted with to greater advantage; and if he did tranſcribe them, why deſtroy the greateſt part of them, and exhibit only ſcraps and detached lines, for ſuch only appear now to exiſt? O.

* Remarks on Warton, p. 9.

† Bryant's Obſervations, p. 477.

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tually misinterpreted, and sometimes mis-transcribed him. Thus in "the English metamorphosis," ver. 14.

"Their myghte is *knopped* ynne the froste of fere."

Chatterton having recourse to Chaucer and Skinner, has interpreted to *knop*, to *tie*, or *fasten*; whereas it really means, and the context requires that it should mean, to *nip*. Thus in the Second Battle of Hastings, 548, describing a sacrifice:

"Roastynge their *vyctualle* round about the flame;"

which Mr. Tyrwhitt himself has allowed ought to be *vyctimes*, and has accordingly cancelled the other word. Thus in Ella, v. 678, we find:

"Theyre throngynge corses shall *onlyghte* the starres."

The word *onlyghte*, Chatterton has here strangely applied as meaning to *darken* the stars, whereas Mr. Byrant, by recurring to the Saxon, very reasonably supposes *on-*

lych

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lyche to have been the proper word, and the line will then mean to *be like*, or to equal the ſtars in number. The word *cheriſauuei*, which Chatterton has inſerted in the "Introductionne to Ella," never did really exiſt, and Mr. Bryant ſhews that the original word was certainly *cheriſaunce*: and in the Second Eclogue, Chatterton has explained the word *amenuſed*, by *leſſened*, or *diminiſhed*; whereas the ſame able critic ſhews, that it never had any ſuch meaning, but that it really ſignifies *accurſed* or *abominable*. Theſe and other ſimilar miſtakes (of which Mr. Bryant ſpecifies a great number) he aſſerts, could never have happened, had Chatterton been any more than the mere tranſcriber of theſe extraordinary poems *.

VI. With reſpect to the objection, that Rowley is not mentioned by other writers, it is anſwered, that there exiſted ſo

* See Mr. Bryant's Obſervations, paſſim.

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little communication among mankind at that time, that Leland, who is a very curious writer, never makes the ſmalleſt mention of Canynge, Lydgate, or Occleve. That William of Worceſtre, does not mention Rowley, becauſe, unleſs hiſtory demands it, writers do not commonly commemorate perſons before their death, and Rowley was apparently alive when William of Worceſtre was at Briſtol. In the regiſter of the Dioceſe of Wells, however, there are two perſons of the name of Thomas Rowley, mentioned as admitted into Holy Orders, one of whom might be the author of the poems*. In anſwer to the objection, why theſe manuſcripts remained ſo long unknown to the world, Mr. Bryant ſays, "We may not be able to account any more for theſe manuſcripts being ſo long neglected, than for thoſe of Heſychius, Phœdrus, and Velleius

* Mr. Bryant's Obſ. p. 535, 543 544.

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ius Paterculus having been in the ſame ſituation *:" and with reſpect to the ſecreting of the originals by Chatterton, it is deemed a ſufficient reply, that he might conceive very highly of their value, and therefore did not wiſh to part with them, or he might be apprehenſive that they would be taken from him; and at laſt, in his indignation againſt the world, he probably deſtroyed all of them that remained at the time when he determined upon putting an end to his exiſtence.

VII. The conceſſions of the adverſaries ought not to paſs unnoticed on this occaſion. Mr. Warton admits, "that ſome poems written by Rowley might have been preſerved in Canynge's cheſt; but if there were any, they were ſo enlarged and improved by Chatterton, as to become entirely new compoſitions †;" and in a ſub-

* Ibid, 499.

† Hiſtory of Engliſh Poetry.

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ſequent publication, ſays, "I will not deny that Chatterton might diſcover parchments of humble proſe, containing local memoirs and authentic deeds, illuſtrating the hiſtory of Briſtol. He might have diſcovered biographical diaries, or other notices of the lives of Canynge, Iſcham, and Gorges." Theſe conceſſions at leaſt imply ſomething of a doubt on the mind of the Laureat, concerning the exiſtence of ſome important manuſcripts, and ſeem of ſome conſideration in the ſcale of controverſy.

Internal Evidence in favour of the authenticity of Rowley's Poems.

I. The internal evidence (which we may call poſitive) on this ſide of the queſtion is not very extenſive, and the bulk of it conſiſts in negative arguments, or a refutation of the adverſaries' objections. The moſt material proof is derived from the

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the ALLUSIONS TO FACTS and CUSTOMS, of which there is not much probability, that Chatterton could have a competent knowledge. Thus, if the "Dethe of Sir Charles Bawdin" be ſuppoſed, as Mr. Tyrwhitt himſelf thinks probable, to refer to the execution of Sir Baldwin of Fulford, the fact meets confirmation in all its circumſtances, from a fragment publiſhed by Hearne, and alſo from a parliamentary roll of the eighth of Edward IV; neither which there is the leaſt probability that Chatterton ever ſaw*. Thus the names which occur in the Battle of Haſtings, may almoſt all be authenticated from the old hiſtorians; but they are ſcattered in ſuch a variety of books, that they could not be extracted without infinite labour, and ſeveral of the books were in all probability not acceſſible by Chatterton.

* Obſervations on Rowley's poems, p. 14.

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To this head we may refer many particulars concerning Canynge, &c. as related by Chatterton, ſuch as his paying 3000 marks to the king, *pro pace ſua habenda*, &c. which are confirmed in an extraordinary manner by W. of Worceſtre, whoſe book was not made public till 1778, and which it was therefore impoſſible Chatterton could ſee previous to the publication of his memoirs; ſuch is alſo the time of Canynge's entering into Holy Orders, which is confirmed by the Epiſcopal regiſter of Worceſter; and the anecdote of the ſteeple of Redcliffe church being burnt down by lightning in 1446. Of a ſimiliar kind is a circumſtance in the the orthography of the name *Feſcampe*, (which is the right orthography,) while Holingſhead, the only author acceſſible to Chatterton, has it *Fliſchampe*. The name of Robert Conſul alſo, whom Rowley repreſents as having repaired the caſtle of Briſtol,

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Briſtol, occurs in Leland, as the proprietor of that Caſtle*.

II. With regard to the STYLE, COMPOSITION, and SENTIMENT. If the poems appear ſuperior to the efforts of the firſt ſcholars at the revival of letters; what are they, when conſidered as the productions of an uneducated charity boy, not quite ſeventeen? Thoſe alſo who think that Chatterton could not reduce his genius to the ſtandard of the age of Rowley, ſhould, perhaps, rather wonder why he could never raiſe his own avowed productions to an equal degree of excellence †. The poems attributed to Rowley, if his, are as much the work of his infantine years, as his own miſcellaneous poems; indeed,

* See Bryant's Obſervations, p. 314, 326, 343, &c.

† The moſt eſſential difference that ſtrikes me between the poems of Rowley and Chatterton is, that the former are always built upon ſome conſiſtent intereſting plot, and are more *uniformly* excellent in the execution; the latter are irregular ſallies upon ill-ſelected or trifling ſubjects.

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indeed, many of the latter were compoſed ſome time after moſt of Rowley's were exhibited to the world; that they ſhould be inferior in every excellence of poetry, is therefore a myſtery not eaſy to be accounted for. Againſt the general propoſition, that poetry like other arts is progreſſive, and never arrived to perfection in an early age; it has been judiciouſly urged, that "Genius is peculiar neither to *age* nor country," but that we have an example of one man (Homer), who in the very infancy of all arts, without guide or precurſor, "gave to the world a work, which has been the admiration and model of all ſucceeding poets †." And though it be admitted, that Rowley's poems are pervaded by an uniform ſtrain of excellence and taſte, which does not appear in the other works of his age now extant, yet when

† Matthias's Eſſay, p. 98.

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when we compare any compoſition with another of the ſame or of any prior age, the difference ſubſiſting, will frequently be found not to depend upon *time*, but upon the ſituation, genius and judgment of the reſpective authors †.

III. As to METRE, it is ſaid, that in all languages the modes and meaſures of verſe were originally invented and adopted from accidental circumſtances, and agreeably to the taſte of different authors; and that very early in the Engliſh poetry, a great variety of meaſures are known to have prevailed, ſuch is the octave ſtanza, which is not many removes from the uſual ſtanza of Rowley, the ſeven lined ſtanza, or Rithm Royal, and that of ten lines uſed by Chaucer in one of his ſmaller poems. The argument founded on the ſmoothneſs of the verſe, is attempted to be overturned by Mr. Bryant,

† Matthias's Eſſay, p. 72.

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Bryant, who has produced extracts from poems ſtill older than the age of Rowley, which are deficient neither in harmony nor cadence *.

IV. The objection founded on the ancient LANGUAGE of Rowley, is anſwered by ſuppoſing that his language was probably provincial †. Several of the words objected to as of Chatterton's coining, have by more profound reſearches been traced in ancient writers. Many words in Rowley's poems cannot be found in thoſe dictionaries and gloſſaries, to which Chatterton had acceſs ‡, and Chatterton's miſtakes in tranſcribing and explaining the old language of Rowley, have already been inſtanced.

V. Many of the pretended IMITATIONS of THE MODERN poets to be found

* Obſervations, p. 425, &c. 552.
† Ibid, p. 1, to 25.
‡ Matthias's Eſſay, p. 77.

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found in Rowley, are objected to upon good grounds, as being ideas obvious to Rowley or any man; and as to the others, why may we not ſuppoſe them, "inſertions of Chatterton, either to pleaſe his own ear, or to reſtore ſome parts which were loſt, or in places where the words were difficult to be decypered*?" This argument acquires great weight, when the temper and genius of Chatterton is conſidered, and when it is recollected that all parties agree in the probability of many interpolations being made by him; and if this argument be admitted, it will in a great meaſure account for the modern phraſelogy which ſo frequently occurs in theſe poems.

In rejoinder to theſe arguments, a few facts have been ſtated by thoſe who ſupport

* Matthias's Eſſay, p. 105.

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port the title of Chatterton. 1ſt. That no writings or cheſt depoſited in Redcliffe church are mentioned in Mr. Canynge's will, which has been carefully inſpected, nor any books except two, called "Liggers cum integra legenda," which he leaves to be uſed occaſionally in the choir by the two chaplains eſtabliſhed by him *. 2d. To account for Chatterton's extenſive acquaintance with old books out of the common line of reading, it is alledged that the old library at Briſtol was, during his life time, of univerſal acceſs, and Chatterton was actually introduced to it by the Rev. Mr. Catcott †. 3d. Chatterton's account of Canynge, &c. as far as it is countenanced by William of Worceſtre, (that is, as far as reſpects his taking orders and paying a fine to the king) may be found in the epitaph on Maſter Canynge, ſtill remaining to be read by every perſon, both in Latin

* Tywrhitt's Vindication, p. 117.
† Warton's Inquiry, p. 111.

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Latin and Engliſh, in Redcliffe church, which indeed appears to be the authority, that William of Worceſtre himſelf has followed. Chatterton's account alſo of Redcliffe ſteeple, is to be found at the bottom of a print of that church, publiſhed in 1746, by one John Halfpenny, "in which was recounted the ruin of the ſteeple in 1446, by a tempeſt and fire *," 4th. As to the old vellum or parchment on which Chatterton tranſcribed his fragments, it is obſerved, that "at the bottom of each ſheet of old deeds, (of which there were many in the Briſtol cheſt) there is uſually a blank ſpace of about four or five inches in breadth;" and this exactly agrees with the ſhape and ſize of the largeſt fragment which he has exhibited, viz. Eight and a half inches long, and four and a-half broad †.

* Tywrhitt's Vindication, p. 113, 212.
† Curſory Obſervations, p. 29.

THUS

THUS I have exhibited as faithfully as I was able, an abſtract of the arguments on both ſides of this curious literary queſtion. To the examination I ſat down with a ſceptical mind; nor can I recollect being influenced during the progreſs of the inquiry in a ſingle inſtance, by the authority of names, by the force of ridicule, or the partialities of friendſhip. Some remarks, I believe, I may have added, which are not to be found in other books; in this, however, I am not conſcious of having favoured one party more than the other, but eſteemed it a part of my duty to ſtate the obſervations as they roſe in my mind from a conſideration of the facts. I ſhall not intrude upon my readers any verdict of my own concerning the iſſue of the controverſy; ſince my only intention was to enable them, from a view of the arguments, to form their own concluſions; leaving them ſtill open to the

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the impreſſion of any additional or more ſatisfactory evidence that may hereafter ariſe. I cannot, however, lay aſide my pen without one general reflection. It is impoſſible to peruſe the ſtate of this controverſy, without ſmiling at the folly and vanity of poſthumous fame. The author of theſe poems, whoever he was, certainly never flattered himſelf with the expectation that they would ever excite half the curioſity, or half the admiration which they have excited in the literary world. If they really be the productions of Rowley, one of the firſt, both in order and in merit of our Engliſh poets, is defrauded of more than half his reputation; if they be the works of Chatterton, they neither ſerved to raiſe him in the opinion of his intimate acquaintance and friends, nor to procure for him the comforts or even the neceſſaries of life. He has deſcended to his grave with a dubious cha-

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racter; and the only praiſe which can be accorded him by the warmeſt of his admirers, is that of an elegant and ingenious impoſtor.

For the ſatisfaction of thoſe readers, who may wiſh to review the whole controverſy at large, and for the information of poſterity, I ſubjoin the moſt accurate liſt I have been able to procure of all the publications which have appeared on both ſides.

A Liſt of the various Publications upon the Subject of ROWLEY'S POEMS, *for* and *againſt* their *Authenticity*.

EDITIONS OF ROWLEY.

POEMS, ſuppoſed to have been written at Briſtol by Thomas Rowley, and others, in the Fifteenth Century; the greateſt Part now firſt publiſhed from the moſt authentic Copies, with an engraved Specimen of one of the MS. To which are added, a Preface, an Introductory Account of the ſeveral Pieces, and a Gloſſary. Ed. 8vo. 1777.

N. B. This Edition has been reprinted.

Ditto: with a Commentary, in which the Antiquity of them is conſidered and defended, by Jeremiah Milles, D. D. Dean of Exeter. Ed. 4to. 1782.

THE

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THE EIGHTH Section of Mr. Warton's Second Volume of the Hiſtory of Engliſh Poetry, with the Notes to it.

REMARKS on the Eighth Section of Mr. Warton's Second Volume of the Hiſtory of Engliſh Poetry.

Payne, Mews-Gate.

Two Letters by the Hon. Mr. Horace Walpole; printed at Strawberry-hill.—Reprinted, (by his permiſſion) in the Gentleman's Magazines for April, May, June, July, 1782.

APPENDIX, containing ſome Obſervations upon the Language of the Poems attributed to Rowley, tending to prove, that they were written not by any ancient Author, but entirely by Thomas Chatterton. *Payne, Mews-Gate.*

N. B. This Appendix is *now* generally annexed to the 8vo. Edition of Rowley's Poems.

OBSERVATIONS on the Poems attributed to Rowley, tending to prove, that they were really written by Him and other Ancient Authors. To which are added, Remarks on the Appendix of the Editor (of the 8vo. Ed). of Rowley's Poems. *Bathurſt, Fleet-Street.*

OBSERVATIONS upon the Poems of Thomas Rowley; in which the Authenticity of thoſe Poems is aſcertained. By Jacob Bryant, Eſq. *Payne, Mews-Gate, &c.*

CURSORY Obſervations on the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley, a Prieſt in the fifteenth Century: with ſome Remarks on the Commentaries on theſe Poems, by the Reverend Dr. Jeremiah Milles, Dean of Exeter, and Jacob Bryant, Eſq. *Nichols and Walter, Charing-croſs.*

AN ENQUIRY into the Authenticity of the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley, in which the Arguments of the

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Dean of Exeter and Mr. Bryant are examined. By Thomas Warton, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and F. S. A. *Dodſley, Pall-Mall.*

STRICTURES upon a Pamphlet entitled, "Curſory Obſervations on the Poems attributed to Rowley, a Prieſt in the Fifteenth Century." With a Poſtſcript on Mr. Thomas Warton's Enquiry into the ſame Subject. By. E. B. Greene, Eſq. *Stockdale, Piccadilly.*

A VINDICATION of the APPENDIX to the Poems called Rowley's: In Reply to the Anſwers of the Dean of Exeter, Jacob Bryant Eſq. and a third anonymous Writer; with ſome further obſervations upon thoſe Poems, and an Examination of the Evidence which has been produced in Support of their Authenticity. By Thomas Tyrwhitt. *Payne, Mew's-Gate.*

AN ESSAY on the Evidence, External and Internal, relating to the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley and others, in the Fifteenth Century, containing a general View of the whole Controverſy. By Thomas James Mathias. *Becket, Pall Mall.*

To which may be added various ſhorter Compoſitions on the Subject (too numerous to ſpecify) inſerted in the different monthly Magazines.

APPENDIX.

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APPENDIX.

The following Poem was copied from a manuſcript of CHATTERTON, *and the Editor believes has never before been preſented to the Public.*

The ART of PUFFING,

By a BOOKSELLER's JOURNEYMAN.

VERS'D by experience in the ſubtle art,
The myſt'ries of a title I impart:
Teach the young author how to pleaſe the town;
And make the heavy drug of rhime go down.
Since Curl, immortal, never dying name,
A double pica in the book of fame,
By various arts did various dunces prop,
And tickled every fancy to his ſhop:
Who can like Pottinger enſure a book?
Who judges with the ſolid taſte of Cooke?
Villains exalted in the midway ſky,
Shall live again, to drain your purſes dry:
Nor yet unrivall'd they; ſee Baldwin comes,
Rich in inventions, patents, cuts and hums:
The honorable Boſwell writes, 'tis true,
What elſe can Paoli's ſupporter do?

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The trading wits endeavour to attain,
Like bookſellers, the world's firſt idol—gain:
For this they puff the heavy Goldſmith's line,
And hail his ſentiment tho' trite, divine;
For this, the patriotic bard complains,
And Bingley binds poor liberty in chains:
For this was every reader's faith deceiv'd,
And Edmund ſwore what nobody believ'd:
For this the wits in cloſe diſguiſes fight;
For this the varying politicians write;
For this each month new magazines are ſold,
With dullneſs fill'd and tranſcripts of the old.
The Town and Country ſtruck a lucky hit,
Was novel, ſentimental, full of wit:
Aping her walk, the ſame ſucceſs to find,
The Court and City hobbles far behind:
Sons of Apollo learn, merit's no more
Than a good frontiſpiece to grace her door;
The author who invents a title well,
Will always find his cover'd dullneſs ſell;
Flexney and every bookſeller will buy,—
Bound in neat calf, the work will never die.

VAMP.

July 22, 1770.

LETTERS

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LETTERS

OF

THOMAS CHATTERTON.

LETTER I.

London, April 26, 1770.

Dear Mother,

HERE I am, ſafe, and in high ſpirits —To give you a journal of my tour would not be unneceſſary. After riding in the baſket to Briſſington, I mounted the top of the coach, and rid eaſy; and agreeably entertained with the converſation of a quaker *in dreſs*, but little ſo in perſonals and behaviour. This laughing friend, who is a carver, lamented his having ſent his tools to Worceſter, as otherwiſe he would have accompanied me

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to London. I left him at Bath; when, finding it rained pretty faſt, I entered an inſide paſſenger to Speenhamland, the half-way ſtage, paying ſeven ſhillings. 'Twas lucky I did ſo, for it ſnowed all night, and on Marlborough Downs the ſnow was near a foot high.

At ſeven in the morning I breakfaſted at Speenhamland, and then mounted the coach-box for the remainder of the day, which was a remarkable fine one.—Honeſt gee-ho complimented me with aſſuring me, that I ſat bolder and tighter than any perſon who ever rid with him. —Dined at Stroud moſt luxuriantly, with a young gentleman who had ſlept all the preceding night in the machine; and an old mercantile genius, whoſe ſchool-boy ſon had a great deal of wit, as the father thought, in remarking that Windſor was as old as *our Saviour's time*.

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Got into London about five o'clock in the evening—called upon Mr. Edmunds, Mr. Fell, Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Dodſley. Great encouragement from them; all approved of my deſign;—ſhall ſoon be ſettled.——Call upon Mr. Lambert; ſhew him this, or tell him, if I deſerve a recommendation, he would oblige me to give me one—if I do not, it will be beneath him to take notice of me. Seen all aunts, couſins—all well—and I am welcome. Mr. T. Wenſley is alive, and coming home.——Siſter, grandmother, &c. &c. &c. remember.—I remain,

Your dutiful ſon,

T. Chatterton.

LETTER

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LETTER II.

Shoreditch, London, May 6, 1770.

Dear Mother,

I am ſurpriſed that no letter has been ſent in anſwer to my laſt. I am ſettled, and in ſuch a ſettlement as I would deſire. I get four guineas a month by one Magazine: ſhall engage to write a Hiſtory of England, and other pieces, which will more than double that ſum. Occaſional eſſays for the daily papers would more than ſupport me. What a glorious proſpect! Mr. Wilkes knew me by my writings ſince I firſt correſponded with the bookſellers here. I ſhall viſit him next week, and by his intereſt will inſure Mrs. Ballance the Trinity-Houſe. He affirmed that what Mr. Fell had of mine could not be the writings of a youth; and expreſſed a deſire to know the author. By the means of another bookſeller

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bookſeller I ſhall be introduced to Townſhend and Sawbridge. I am quite familiar at the Chapter Coffee-houſe, and know all the geniuſes there. A character is now unneceſſary; an author carries his character in his pen. My ſiſter will improve herſelf in drawing. My grandmother is, I hope, well. Briſtol's mercenary walls were never deſtined to hold me.—there, I was out of my element; now, I am in it—London! Good God! how ſuperior is London to that deſpicable place Briſtol!—Here is none of your little meanneſſes, none of your mercenary ſecurities, which diſgrace that miſerable hamlet.—Dreſs, which is in Briſtol an eternal fund of ſcandal, is here only introduced as a ſubject of praiſe; if a man dreſſes well, he has taſte; if careleſs, he has his own reaſons for ſo doing, and is prudent. Need I remind you of the contraſt? The poverty of authors is a common

common obſervation, but not always a true one. No author can be poor who underſtands the arts of bookſellers—Without this neceſſary knowledge, the greateſt genius may ſtarve; and, with it, the greateſt dunce live in ſplendor. This knowledge I have pretty well dipped into.—The Levant man of war, in which T. Wenſley went out, is at Portſmouth; but no news from him yet.—I lodge in one of Mr. Walmſley's beſt rooms. Let Mr. Cary copy the letters on the other ſide, and give them to the perſons for whom they are deſigned, if not too much labour for him.

I remain, yours, &c.

T. Chatterton.

P. S. I have ſome trifling preſents for my mother, ſiſter Thorne, &c.

Sunday morning,

For

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For Mr. T. CARY.

I have ſent you a taſk. I hope no unpleaſing one. Tell all your acquaintance for the future to read the Freeholder's Magazine. When you have any thing for publication, ſend it to me, and it ſhall moſt certainly appear in ſome periodical compilation. Your laſt piece was, by the ignorance of a corrector, jumbled under the conſiderations in the acknowledgements. But I reſcued it, and inſiſted on its appearance.

Your friend,

T. C.

Direct for me, to be left at the Chapter Coffee-houſe, Pater-noſter-row.

Mr. HENRY KATOR.

If you have not forgot Lady Betty, any Complaint, Rebus, or Enigma, on the dear charmer, directed for me, to be left at the

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the Chapter Coffee-houſe, Pater-noſter-row—ſhall find a place in ſome Magazine, or other; as I am engaged in many.

Your friend,

T. Chatterton.

Mr. WILLIAM SMITH.

When you have any poetry for publication, ſend it to me, to be left at the Chapter Coffee-houſe, Pater-noſter-row, and it ſhall moſt certainly appear.

Your friend,

T. C.

Mrs. BAKER.

The ſooner I ſee you the better—ſend me as ſoon as poſſible Rymſdyk's addreſs.

(Mr. Cary will leave this at Mr. Flower's, Small-ſtreet.)

Mr. MASON.

Give me a ſhort proſe deſcription of the ſituation of Naſh—and the poetic addition ſhall

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ſhall appear in ſome Magazine. Send me alſo whatever you would have publiſhed, and direct for me, to be left at the Chapter Coffee-houſe, Pater-noſter-row.

Your friend,

T. Chatterton.

Mr. MAT. MEASE.

Begging Mr. Meaſe's pardon for making public uſe of his name lately—I hope he will remember me, and tell all his acquaintance to read the Freeholder's Magazine for the future.

T. Chatterton.

TELL——

Mr. Thaire	Mr. Rudhall	Mr. Ward
Mr. Gaſter	Mr. Thomas	Mr. Kalo
Mr. A. Broughton	Mr. Carty	Mr. Smith
Mr. J. Broughton	Mr. Hanmor	&c. &c.
Mr. Williams	Mr. Vaughan	

to read the Freeholder's Magazine.

LETTER

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LETTER III.

King's Bench, for the preſent, May 14, 1770.

Dear Madam,

Don't be ſurprized at the name of the place. I am not here as a priſoner. Matters go on ſwimmingly: Mr. Fell having offended certain perſons, they have ſet his creditors upon him, and he is ſafe in the King's Bench. I have been bettered by this accident: His ſucceſſors in the Freeholder's Magazine, knowing nothing of the matter, will be glad to engage me, on my own terms. Mr. Edmunds has been tried before the Houſe of Lords, ſentenced to pay a fine, and thrown into Newgate. His misfortunes will be to me of no little ſervice. Laſt week, being in the pit of Drury Lane, Theatre, I contracted an immediate acquaintance (which you know is no hard taſk to me) with a young gentleman

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man in Cheapside; partner in a music shop, the greatest in the city. Hearing I could write, he desired me to write a few songs for him: this I did the same night, and conveyed them to him the next morning. These he shewed to a Doctor in Music, and I am invited to treat with this Doctor, on the footing of a composer, for Ranelagh and the Gardens. *Bravo, hey boys, up we go!* — Besides the advantage of visiting these expensive and polite places gratis; my vanity will be fed with the sight of my name in copper-plate, and my sister will receive a bundle of printed songs, the words by her brother. These are not all my acquisitions: a gentleman who knows me at the Chapter, as an author, would have introduced me as a companion to the young Duke of Northumberland, in his intended general tour. But, alas! I speak no tongue but my own! — But to return once more to a place I am

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ſickened to write of, Briſtol. Though, as an apprentice, none had greater liberties, yet the thoughts of ſervitude killed me: now I have that for my labour, I always reckoned the firſt of my pleaſures, and have ſtill, my liberty. As to the clearance, I am ever ready to give it; but really I underſtand ſo little of the law, that I believe Mr. Lambert muſt draw it. Mrs. L. brought what you mention. Mrs. Hughes is as well as age will permit her to be, and my couſin does very well.

I will get ſome patterns worth your acceptance; and wiſh you and my ſiſter would improve yourſelves in drawing, as it is here a valuable and never-failing acquiſition.——My box ſhall be attended to; I hope my books are in it—if not, ſend them; and particularly Catcott's Hutchinſonian jargon on the Deluge, and the M.S. Gloſſary, compoſed of one ſmall book, annexed to a larger.——My

ſiſter

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ſiſter will remember me to Miſs Sandford. I have not quite forgot her; though there are ſo many pretty milleners, &c. that I have almoſt forgot myſelf.——Carty will think on me: upon inquiry, I find his trade dwindled into nothing here. A man may very nobly ſtarve by it; but he muſt have luck indeed, who can live by it.——Miſs Rumſey, if ſhe comes to London, would do well, as an old acquaintance, to ſend me her addreſs.——London is not Briſtol—We may patrole the town for a day, without raiſing one whiſper, or nod of ſcandal.—If ſhe refuſes, the curſe of all antiquated virgins light on her: may ſhe be refuſed, when ſhe ſhall requeſt! Miſs Rumſey will tell Miſs Baker, and Miſs Baker will tell Miſs Porter, that Miſs Porter's favoured humble ſervant, though but a *young* man, is a very old lover; and in the eight-and-fiftieth year of his age: but that, as Lap-

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pet ſays, is the flower of a man's days; and when a lady can't get a young huſband, ſhe muſt put up with an old bedfellow. I left Miſs Singer, I am ſorry to ſay it, in a very bad way; that is, in a way to be married.——But mum—Aſk Miſs Suky Webb the reſt; if ſhe knows, ſhe'll tell ye.—I beg her pardon for revealing the ſecret; but when the knot is faſtened, ſhe ſhall know how I came by it.—Miſs Thatcher may depend upon it, that, if I am not in love with her, I am in love with nobody elſe: I hope ſhe is well; and if that whining, ſighing, dying pulpit-fop, Lewis, has not finiſhed his languiſhing lectures, I hope ſhe will ſee her amoroſo next Sunday.—If Miſs Love has no objection to having a crambo ſong on her name publiſhed, it ſhall be done.—Begging pardon of Miſs Cotton for whatever has happened to offend her, I can aſſure her it has happened without

my

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my conſent. I did not give her this aſ-ſurance when in Briſtol, leſt it ſhould ſeem like an attempt to avoid the anger of her *furious* brother. Inquire, when you can, how Miſs Broughton received her billet. Let my ſiſter ſend me a jour-nal of all the tranſactions of the females within the circle of your acquaintance. Let Miſs Watkins know, that the letter ſhe made herſelf ridiculous by, was never intended for her; but another young lady in the neighbourhood, of the ſame name. I promiſed, before my departure, to write to ſome hundreds, I believe; but, what with writing for publications, and going to places of public diverſion, which is as abſolutely neceſſary to me as food, I find but little time to write to you. As to Mr. Barrett, Mr. Catcott, Mr. Bur-gum, &c. &c. they rate literary lumber ſo low, that I believe an author, in their eſtimation, muſt be poor indeed! But

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here matters are otherwiſe; had Rowley been a Londoner, inſtead of a Briſtowyan, I could have lived by copying his works. ——In my humble opinion, I am under very few obligations to any perſons in Briſtol: one, indeed, has obliged me; but, as moſt do, in a manner which makes his obligation no obligation.—My youthful acquaintances will not take it in dudgeon, that I do not write oftener to them, than I believe I ſhall: but, as I had the happy art of pleaſing in converſation, my company was often liked, where I did not like: and to continue a correſpondence under ſuch circumſtances, would be ridiculous. Let my ſiſter improve in copying muſic, drawing, and every thing which requires genius: in Briſtol's mercantile ſtyle thoſe things may be uſeleſs, if not a detriment to her; but here they are highly profitable. ——Inform Mr. Rhiſe that nothing ſhall be wanting, on my part,

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part, in the buſineſs he was ſo kind as to employ me in; ſhould be glad of a line from him, to know whether he would engage in the marine department; or ſpend the reſt of his days, ſafe, on dry grounnd.—Intended waiting on the Duke of Bedford relative to the Trinity-Houſe; but his Grace is dangerouſly ill. My grandmother, I hope, enjoys the ſtate of health I left her in. I am Miſs Webb's humble ſervant. Thorne ſhall not be forgot, when I remit the ſmall trifles to you. Notwithſtanding Mrs. B's not being able to inform me of Mr. Garſed's addreſs, through the cloſeneſs of the pious Mr. Ewer, I luckily ſtumbled upon it this morning.

I remain, &c. &c. &c. &c.

Monday Evening. Thomas Chatterton.

(Direct for me, at Mr. Walmſley's, at Shoreditch—only.)

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LETTER IV.

Tom's Coffee-house, London, May 30, 1770.

Dear Sister,

There is such a noise of business and politicks in the room, that my inaccuracy in writing here, is highly excusable. My present profession obliges me to frequent places of the best resort. To begin with, what every female conversation begins with, dress: I employ my money now in fitting myself fashionably, and getting into good company; this last article always brings me in interest. But I have engaged to live with a gentleman, the brother of a Lord (a Scotch one indeed), who is going to advance pretty deeply into the bookselling branches: I shall have lodging and boarding, genteel and elegant, gratis: this article, in the quarter of the town he lives, with worse accommodations, would be 50l. per annum.

I shall

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I ſhall have, likewiſe, no inconſiderable premium; and aſſure yourſelf every month ſhall end to your advantage: I will ſend you two ſilks this ſummer; and expect, in anſwer to this, what colours you prefer. My mother ſhall not be forgotten. My employment will be writing a voluminous Hiſtory of London, to appear in numbers the beginning of the next winter. As this will not, like writing political eſſays, oblige me to go to the coffee-houſe, I ſhall be able to ſerve you the more by it: but it will neceſſitate me to go to Oxford, Cambridge, Lincoln, Coventry, and every collegiate church near; not at all diſagreeable journeys, and not to me expenſive. The Manuſcript Gloſſary, I mentioned in my laſt, muſt not be omitted. If money flowed as faſt upon me as honours, I would give you a portion of 5000l. You have, doubtleſs, heard of the Lord Mayor's remonſtrating

and

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and addreſſing the King: but it will be a piece of news, to inform you that I have been with the Lord Mayor on the occaſion. Having addreſſed an eſſay to his Lordſhip, it was very well received; perhaps better than it deſerved; and I waited on his Lordſhip, to have his approbation, to addreſs a ſecond letter to him, on the ſubject of the remonſtrance, and its reception. His Lordſhip received me as politely as a citizen could; and warmly invited me to call on him again. The reſt is a ſecret——But the devil of the matter is, there's no money to be got of this ſide the queſtion. Intereſt is of the other ſide. But he is a poor author, who cannot write on both ſides. I believe I may be introduced (and, if I am not, I'll introduce myſelf) to a ruling power in the Court party. I might have a recommendation to Sir George Colebrook, an Eaſt-India Director, as qualified

fied for an office no ways deſpicable; but I ſhall not take a ſtep to the ſea, whilſt I can continue on land. I went yeſterday to Woolwich, to ſee Mr. Wenſley; he is paid to-day. The artillery is no unpleaſing ſight, if we bar reflection, and do not conſider how much miſchief it may do. Greenwich Hoſpital and St. Paul's Cathedral are the only ſtructures which could reconcile me to any thing out of the Gothic. Mr. Carty will hear from me ſoon: multiplicity of literary buſineſs muſt be my excuſe.—I condole with him, and my dear Miſs Sandford, in the misfortune of Mrs. Carty: my phyſical advice is, to leech her temples plentifully: keep her very low in diet; as much in the dark as poſſible. Nor is this laſt preſcription the whim of an old woman: whatever hurts the eyes, affects the brain: and the particles of light, when

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when the ſun is in the ſummer ſigns, are highly prejudicial to the eyes; and it is from this ſympathetic effect, that the head-ach is general in ſummer. But, above all, talk to her but little, and never contradict her in any thing. This may be of ſervice. I hope it will. Did a paragraph appear in your paper of Saturday laſt, mentioning the inhabitants of London's having opened another view of St. Paul's; and adviſing the corporation, or veſtry of Redclift, to procure a more compleat view of Redclift church? My compliments to Miſs Thatcher: if I am in love, I am; though the devil take me, if I can tell with whom it is. I believe I may addreſs her in the words of Scripture, which no doubt ſhe reveres; "If you had not ploughed with my heifer" (or bullock rather), "you had not found out my riddle." Humbly thanking Miſs

Rumſey

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Rumſey for her complimentary expreſſion, I cannot think it ſatisfactory. Does ſhe, or does ſhe not, intend coming to London? Mrs. O'Coffin has not yet got a place; but there is not the leaſt doubt but ſhe will in a little time.

Eſſay-writing has this advantage, you are ſure of conſtant pay; and when you have once wrote a piece which makes the author enquired after, you may bring the bookſellers to your own terms. Eſſays on the patriotic ſide fetch no more than what the copy is ſold for. As the patriots themſelves are ſearching for a place, they have no gratuities to ſpare. So ſays one of the beggars, in a temporary alteration of mine, in the Jovial Crew:

A patriot was my occupation,
It got me a name but no pelf:
Till, ſtarv'd for the good of the nation,
I begg'd for the good of myſelf.
Fal, lal, &c.

I told

I told them, if 'twas not for me,
Their freedoms would all go to pot;
I promis'd to ſet them all free,
But never a farthing I got.
Fal, lal, &c.

—On the other hand, unpopular eſſays will not even be accepted; and you muſt pay to have them printed: but then you ſeldom loſe by it. Courtiers are ſo ſenſible of their deficiency in merit, that they generally reward all who know how to daub them with an appearance of it. To return to private affairs —— Friend Slude may depend upon my endeavouring to find the publications you mention. They publiſh the Goſpel Magazine here. For a whim I write in it. I believe there are not any ſent to Briſtol; they are hardly worth the carriage—methodiſtical, and unmeaning. With the uſual ceremonies to my mother, and grandmother; and ſincerely, without ceremony, wiſhing them both

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both happy; when it is in my power to make them so, they shall be so; and with my kind remembrance to Miss Webb, and Miss Thorne; I remain, as I ever was,

Yours, &c. to the end of the chapter,

Thomas Chatterton.

P. S. I am this minute pierced through the heart by the black eye of a young lady, driving along in a Hackney-coach. ——I am quite in love: if my love lasts till that time, you shall hear of it in my next.

LETTER V.

June 19, 1770.

Dear Sister,

I have an horrid cold—— The relation of the manner of my catching it may give you more pleasure than the circumstance itself. As I wrote very late Sunday night

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night (or rather very early Monday morning), I thought to have gone to bed pretty ſoon laſt night: when, being half undreſſed, I heard a very doleful voice, ſinging Miſs Hill's favorite bedlamite ſong. The hum-drum of the voice ſo ſtruck me, that though I was obliged to liſten a long while before I could hear the words, I found the ſimilitude in the ſound. After hearing her with pleaſure drawl for above half an hour, ſhe jumped into a briſker tune, and hobbled out the ever-famous ſong, in which poor Jack Fowler was to have been ſatirized.—— "I put my hand into a buſh: I prick'd "my finger to the bone: I ſaw a ſhip "ſailing along: I thought the ſweeteſt "flowers to find:" and other pretty flowery expreſſions, were twanged with no inharmonious bray.——I now ran to the window, and threw up the ſaſh; reſolved to be ſatisfied, whether or no it

was

was the identical Miſs Hill, *in propria perſona.*——But, alas! it was a perſon whoſe twang is very well known, when ſhe is awake, but who had drank ſo much royal bob (the gingerbread-baker for that, you know), that ſhe was now ſinging herſelf aſleep. This ſomnifying liquor had made her voice ſo like the ſweet echo of Miſs Hill's, that if I had not conſidered that ſhe could not ſee her way up to London, I ſhould abſolutely have imagined it hers——There was a fellow and a girl in one corner, more buſy in attending to their own affairs, than the melody.

This part of the letter, for ſome lines, is not legible.

. . . . . the morning) from Marybone gardens; I ſaw the fellow in the cage at the watch-houſe, in the pariſh of St. Giles; and the nymph is an inhabitant of one of Cupid's inns of Court.——There was one ſimilitude it would be injuſtice

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to let slip. A drunken fishman, who sells souse mackarel, and other delicious dainties, to the eternal detriment of all two-penny ordinaries; as his best commodity, his salmon, goes off at three halfpence the piece: this itinerant merchant, this moveable fish-stall, having likewise had his dose of bob-royal, stood still for a while; and then joined chorus, in a tone which would have laid half a dozen lawyers, pleading for their fees, fast asleep: this naturally reminded me of Mr. Haythorne's song of

"Says Plato, who cry oysters should man be vain?"

However, my entertainment, though sweet enough in itself has a dish of sour sauce served up in it; for I have a most horrible wheezing in the throat: but I don't repent that I have this cold; for there are so many nostrums here, that 'tis worth a man's while to get a distemper, he can be cured so cheap.

June 29th, 1770.

My

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My cold is over and gone. If the above did not recall to your mind some scenes of laughter, you have loſt your ideas of riſibility.

LETTER VI.*

Dear Mother,

I ſend you in the box—ſix cups and ſaucers with two baſons, for my ſiſter—If a china tea pot and cream pot, is in your opinion, neceſſary, I will ſend them, but I am informed they are unfaſhionable, and that the red china, which you are provided with, is more in uſe——a cargo of patterns, for yourſelf, with a ſnuff box, right French and very curious in my opinion.

S 2 Two

* Chatterton had probably changed his lodging a little before he wrote this letter. It is a remarkable paſſage where he ſays, he wiſhes he had ſent him up his red pocket book, "as 'tis very material." "More graver," in the 13th line, confirms Mr. Bryant's opinion, p. 481, "that he was not well grounded in the firſt principles of Grammar."

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Two fans—the ſilver one, is more graver than the other, which would ſuit my ſiſter beſt——But that I leave to you both.

Some Britiſh herb ſnuff, in the box; be careful how you open it—(This I omit leſt it injure the other matters)

Some Britiſh herb tobacco for my grandmother, ſome trifles for Thorne. Be aſſured whenever I have the power, my will won't be wanting to teſtify, that I remember you——

Yours,

July 8, 1770. T. Chatterton.

N. B.—I ſhall foreſtall your intended journey, and pop down upon you at Chriſtmas——

I could have wiſhed, you had ſent my red pocket book, as 'tis very material

I bought two very curious twiſted pipes for my grandmother; but both breaking; I was afraid to buy others leſt they ſhould break

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break in the box; and being looſe, injure the china. Have you heard any thing further of the clearance——

Direct for me at Mrs. Angels', Sack-maker, Brooke Street, Holborn.

"Mrs. Chatterton."

LETTER VII.

Dear Siſter,

I have ſent you ſome china and a fan. You have your choice of two. I am ſurpriſed that you choſe purple and gold. I went into the ſhop to buy it: but it is the moſt diſagreeable colour I ever ſaw—dead, lifeleſs, and inelegant. Purple and pink, or lemon and pink, are more genteel and lively. Your anſwer in this affair will oblige me. Be aſſured, that I ſhall ever make your wants, my wants; and ſtretch to the utmoſt to ſerve you. Remember me to Miſs Sandford, Miſs Rumſey, Miſs Singer, &c. &c. &c.

As

As to the ſongs, I have waited this week for them, and have not had time to copy one perfectly: when the ſeaſon's over, you will have 'em all in print. I had pieces laſt month in the following Magazines:

Goſpel Magazine,
Town and Country, viz.

Maria Friendleſs.
Falſe Step.
Hunter of Oddities,
To Miſs Buſh, &c.

Court and City. London. Political Regiſter, &c. &c.

The Chriſtian Magazine, as they are not to be had perfect, are not worth buying——I remain,

Yours,

T. Chatterton.

July 11, 1770.

LET-

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LETTER VIII.

I am now about an Oratorio, which, when finiſhed, will purchaſe you a gown. You may be certain of ſeeing me before the 1ſt of January, 1771.—The clearance is immaterial.—My mother may expect more patterns.—Almoſt all the next Town and Country Magazine is mine. I have an univerſal acquaintance:—my company is courted every where; and, could I humble myſelf to go into a compter, could have had twenty places before now;—but I muſt be among the great; ſtate matters ſuit me better than commercial. The ladies are not out of my acquaintance. I have a deal of buſineſs now, and muſt therefore bid you adieu. You will have a longer letter from me ſoon——and more to the purpoſe.

Yours,

T. C.

20th July, 1770.

FINIS.

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6. On the essential Duties of Life.
7. On Humility.
8. On Temperance.
9. On the Licentiousness of the Tongue.
10. On the Government of the Passions.
11. The Characters of the Hypocrite and the Libertine compared.
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